



Amid the Alien Corn:

*100 Years of Sinai Temple
in Champaign, Illinois*

1904-2004



Sinai Temple

Champaign, Illinois

Amid the Alien Corn: 100 Years of Sinai Temple in Champaign, Illinois • 1904-2004



Sinai Temple

*Amid the Alien Corn: 100 Years of Sinai
Temple in Champaign, Illinois 1904-2004*

was created to commemorate those who came before us and to preserve our story for future generations. Lavishly illustrated, the pages are filled with photographs selected from personal collections, archival material, and Sinai Temple's artwork and Judaica.

Our story is told in five parts. The first section details the history of our Jewish community from the earliest known mid-nineteenth century Jewish settlers to the present. Cornerstone essays further illuminate aspects such as the Religious School, Sisterhood, the Traditional Minyan, the *Havurah* movement, and Synagogue 2000. In the second section, some aspects of our Jewish identity today are explored in a series of candid personal interviews. Biographical sketches of some of our great personalities are presented in the next part. The fourth section comprises engaging essays, "Reminiscences and Reflections," a collection of individual memories and stories and commentary by many of our Temple presidents on events during their terms in office. In addition, Rabbi Norman Klein explores current trends and developments in American Judaism, addressing such issues as diversity, intermarriage, membership, and the need to foster our tradition's ethical and spiritual values. The final part celebrates "This Century of Spirit" with proclamations, lists honoring our

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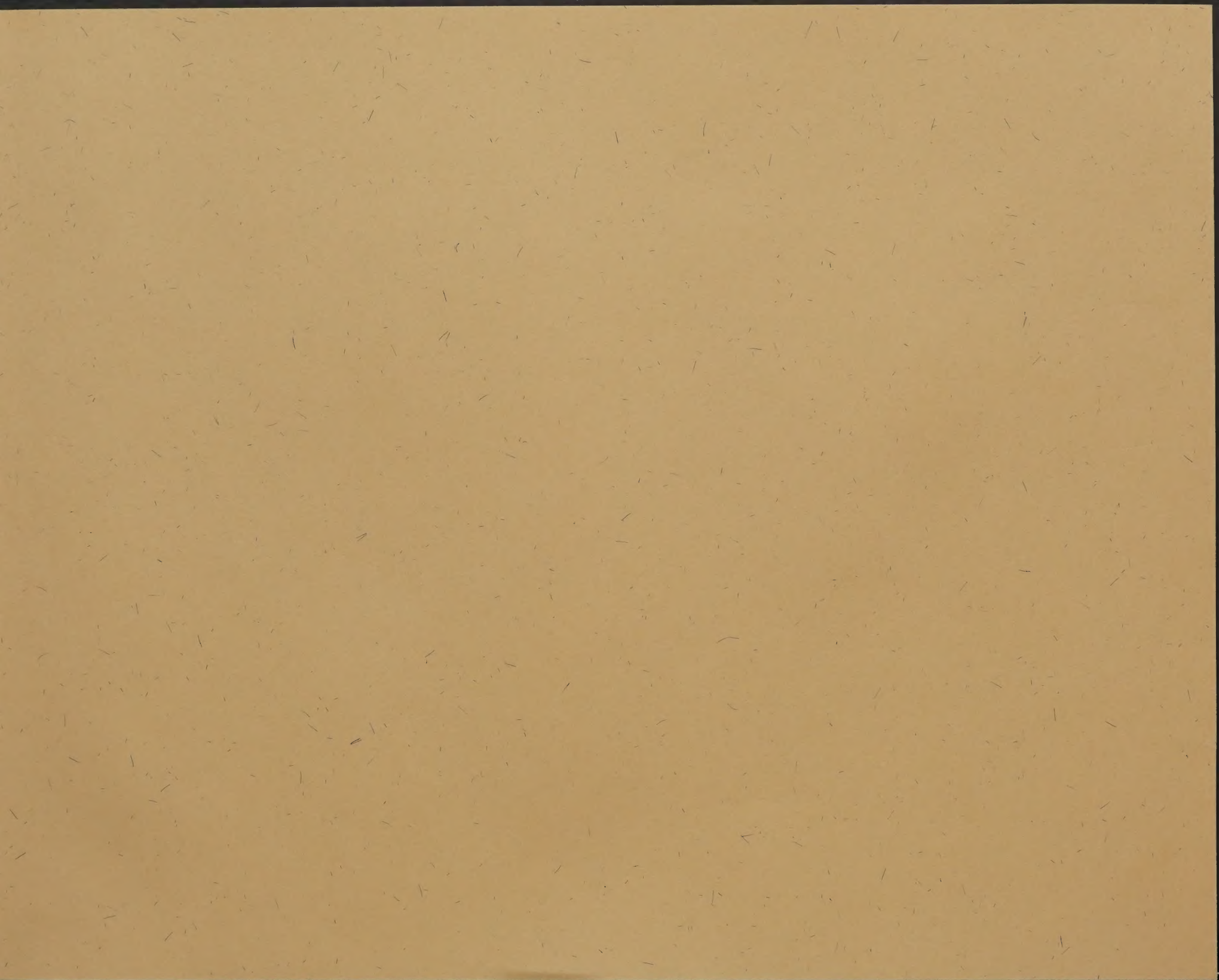
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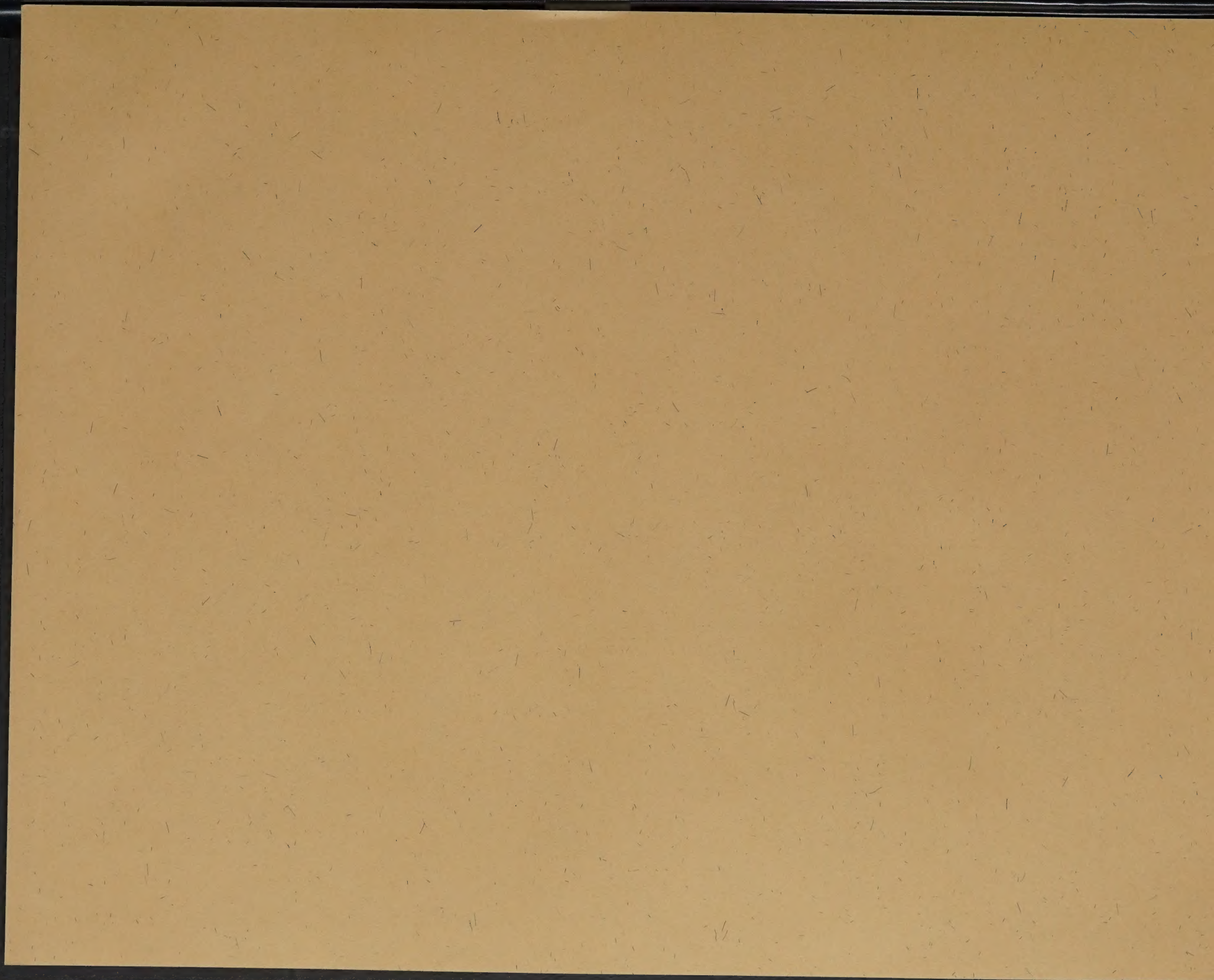
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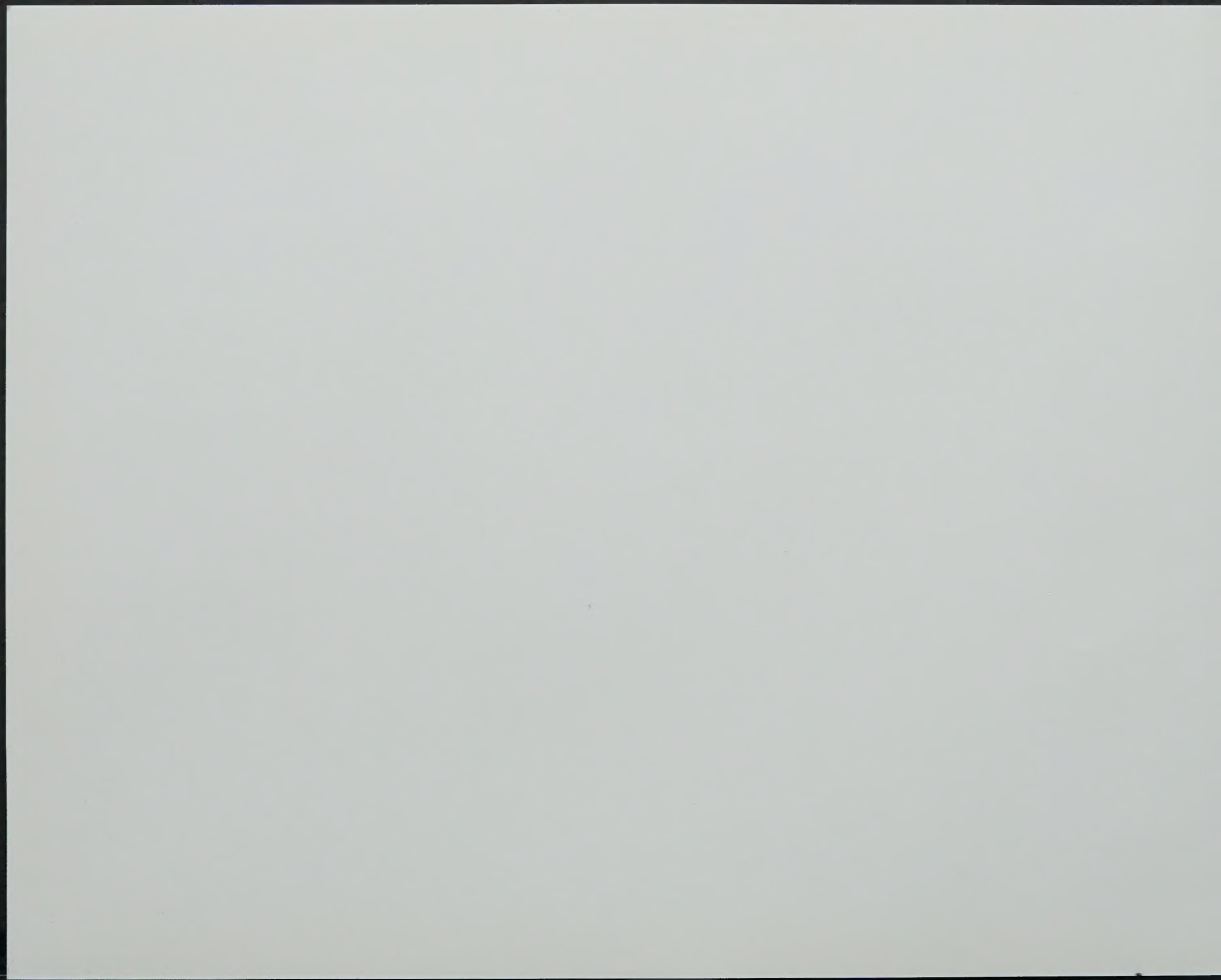






*Amid the
Alien Corn*

Midseason Corn
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*Amid the
Alien Corn:*

*100 Years of
Sinai Temple in
Champaign, Illinois*

1904-2004



Sinai Temple
Champaign, Illinois



This book was published to commemorate the centennial celebration of Sinai Temple of Champaign-Urbana.

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Amid the Alien Corn: 100 Years of Sinai Temple in Champaign, Illinois has been created for the sole purpose of providing information and enjoyment for congregants, friends and staff of Sinai Temple, and anyone else who may have a personal or academic interest in the history of our Jewish community in Champaign-Urbana. Every effort has been made to ensure that this publication is accurate. Any errors or omissions are unintentional. Sinai Temple and production staff disclaim all liability or responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by this publication.

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In this book the reader will find an inconsistency concerning the spelling of God in English. This reflects the expressed preference of the individual authors.—The Editors

The volume you are holding contains the name of God and some examples of sacred text. Please note that this book should be handled and cared for with the respect accorded to such work.—Rabbi Norman Klein

MILTON AND ZELDA DERBER, MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY FROM 1947 UNTIL MOVING FROM CHAMPAIGN IN 1991, LOVINGLY LEFT A BEQUEST TO SINAI TEMPLE IN AFFIRMATION OF THE IMPORTANT ROLE THE TEMPLE HAD PLAYED IN THEIR LIVES. THEIR CHILDREN, CLARA DERBER BLOOMFIELD AND CHARLES DERBER, CHOSE TO SUPPORT THE CENTENARY YEAR OF EVENTS IN THE HOPES THAT OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS WOULD FULFILL THEIR PARENTS' DREAM TO PROMOTE THE LOVE OF JUDAISM. WE THANK THEM FOR THEIR FORESIGHT AND GENEROSITY.



These photos show Milton and Zelda Derber in the early and later years of their marriage. Milt was a professor at the University of Illinois in the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations specializing in unions and industrial democracy. Zelda held a law degree and worked as an editor for the *University of Illinois Law Review*. Photos courtesy of Clara Derber Bloomfield.



Table of Contents

Centennial Committees	viii
<i>Amid the Alien Corn</i> Book Committee.....	ix
Our Book's Title: An Explanation	
<i>by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin and Arthur Robinson</i>	xi
Preface	xiii
Acknowledgments.....	xv

Part I. Temple History

MIDWESTERN JEWISH COMMITMENT AND PRACTICAL AMERICAN IDEALISM

The History of Sinai Temple to 1976 <i>by Asa Rubenstein</i>	1
In the Days of the Second Temple: A History of Sinai Temple	
from the 1960s to the Present <i>by Blair B. Kling</i>	55
Sinai's Spiritual Leaders before 1951	
<i>by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin</i>	68
The Rabbis of Sinai Temple	
<i>by Nancy Tepper and Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin</i>	74

CORNERSTONE ESSAYS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Death as a Beginning: The First Jewish Organizations in	
Champaign County, Illinois <i>by Allen Avner</i>	80
The History of Our Sisterhood <i>by Natalie Frankenberg,</i>	
<i>Reva Egberman, and Susan Schomer</i>	86
The Traditional Minyan <i>by Alice Berkson</i>	88
Teach Them Diligently: The Commitment of	
Sinai Temple Religious School <i>by Beri Schwitzer</i>	92

The Windows of Sinai Temple <i>by Joyce D. Meyer</i>	98
Lesbian and Gay Jews at Sinai Temple <i>by Lisa Busjahn</i>	101
Building the Addition: 1997-1999 <i>by Michael Shapiro</i>	106
<i>M'vakshe Derekb: Seekers of the Way</i>	
<i>by Elizabeth Klein Shapiro</i>	110
The <i>Havurah</i> Movement <i>by Elizabeth Klein Shapiro</i>	111
Synagogue 2000 <i>by Elizabeth Klein Shapiro</i>	112

Part II. Our Jewish Identity: An Anthropological Perspective

Jewish Voices <i>by Edward M. Bruner</i>	115
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Part III. The Great Personalities

Isaac Kuhn <i>by Harry Liebersohn</i>	135
Abram Leon Sachar <i>by Elizabeth H. Pleck</i>	138
Julius and Sol Cohen <i>by Arthur Robinson</i>	144
A Message from Ezra Levin:	
A Statement of Principles (June 1972)	148

Part IV. Reminiscences and Reflections

SOME OF OUR STORIES

Captain Irvin Bloom <i>by Allen Avner</i>	151
The Flying Hebrew <i>by Robert Silverman</i>	152
Growing Up Jewish and Female in	
Champaign-Urbana <i>by Jewel Kurland</i>	154
Memories <i>by Joyce Libman Tavill</i>	158

Childhood Tales from the Ark Side

by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin	161
The Couples' Club by Esther Steinberg	165
The Women Presidents of Sinai Temple:	
A Tribute to Annette Glaser by Elizabeth Lipson	167
Arthur Robinson: Shammash by Lisa Libman	171

THE PRESIDENTS: RECOLLECTIONS

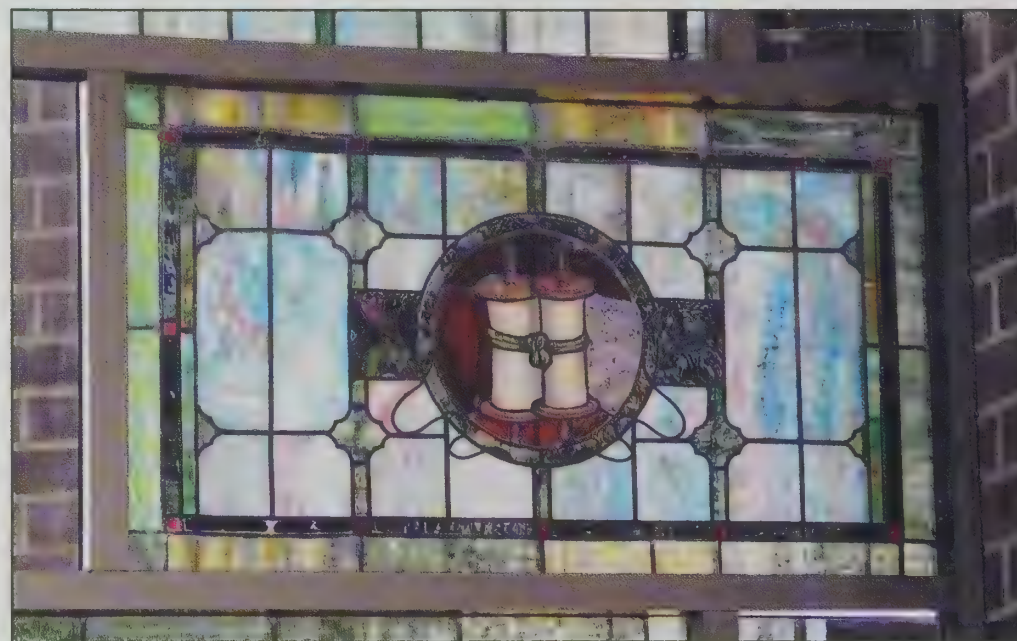
Arthur Lewis	172
Joseph Hamburg	175
Edward Tepper	178
Michael Tepper	179
Miles Klein	180
Charles Kozoll	181
Aaron Kurland	181
Stanley Levy	182
Nancy Tepper	184
Leonard Heumann	186
Michael Shapiro	190
Susan Schomer	191
Lisa Libman	192
Blanche Sudman	194
Gallery of Sinai Temple Presidents 1904-2004	196

RABBI'S REFLECTIONS

Reflections on My Tenure at Sinai Temple in the	
Context of Developments in American Judaism	
by Rabbi Norman Mark Klein	198

Part V. This Century of Spirit

"This Century of Spirit" by Elizabeth Klein	204
Celebrating the 100th Anniversary	205
Proclamations	205
Sinai Temple Military Veterans by Allen Avner	210
Sinai Temple Membership List	
by Lisa Lane Libman and Allen Avner	212
Sinai Temple's Timeline of Events: 1904-2004	
by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin and Allen Avner	218
Our Stories	221
Index	223



CENTENNIAL COMMITTEES

100th ANNIVERSARY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Lisa Lane Libman and Susan Schomer, *Co-Chairs*

CENTENNIAL EVENTS COMMITTEES

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Chair: Susan Schomer

Committee Members: Carol Belber, Joan Kozoll, Terri Gitler, Amy Weisbach, Jan Sholem, Lisa Lane Libman

Audio-Visual Coordinator: Aaron Averbuch

Musical Review—West Sinai Story

Director: Sara Lampert Hoover

Writers: May Berenbaum, Janie Yairi, Marlene Goodfriend, Alex Scheeline, Andrea Klein, Kate Kuper, Sara Lampert Hoover

Cast of Characters: Judy Braunfeld, Andrea Klein, Kate Kuper, Daniel Lichtblau, Dorothy Scheeline, Beri Schwitzer, Michael Shapiro, Sasha Steinberg, Shira Stolarsky, Janie Yairi

Musical Director: Alex Scheeline

SWINGING THROUGH THE SINAI CENTURY

Co-Chairs: Alice Berkson and Amy Weisbach

Program Design: Dori Gordon Walker

Religious School Program: Beri Schwitzer, Kari Imlay

Membership & Religious School Drawings: Lee Egherman, Mic Greenberg

Greeters: Ondine Gross, Rita Blockman, Terri Gitler, Nicole Storch

Registration: Alice Reitz

Sound System: Aaron Averbuch

Centennial Donor Art & Certificates: Ray Spooner

Decorations: Alice McGinty, Susan McQuaid

Dance Coordinators: Hillary Frooman, John Lee

Auction Committee

Co-Chairs: Marcie Wiener and Carol Belber

Committee Members: Susan Donahue, Joyce Nagel, Ilene Silverman

Auctioneer: Gary Porton

Emcee: Paul Donahue

Dinner Committee

Co-Chairs: Rae Spooner and Pat Dessen

Committee: Dori Gordon Walker

Servers: Youth Group

History Fair:

Sinai Scenarios Through the Century

Script: Alice Berkson, Annette Buckmaster, Sherry Steigmann, Blair Kling

Director and Narrator: Sherry Steigmann

Historical Vignettes Cast: Len Heumann, Michael Shapiro, Ralph Senn, Elizabeth Shapiro, Paul Weichsel, Bob Eisenstein, Edward Tepper, Joyce Nagel, Annette Buckmaster, Emily Levin, Tony Novak, Lynn Wachtel

Religious School Historic Timeline

Beri Schwitzer and Amy Weisbach

CENTENNIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEES

Myer Rosenfield Volunteer Plaque

Eva Rosenfield and Steven Scher

Rabbis Wall

Chair: Nancy Tepper

Committee Members:

Aaron Averbuch and Jon Dessen

Veterans Honor Roll Plaque

Co-Chairs: Arthur and Charlotte Westle

Committee Members:

Allen and Elaine Avner, Paula and Wiley Deckard, Reva and Bill Egherman, Robert and Bette Green, Nicole Storch

At right, the Ezra Levin Lounge, an area of the Temple situated just outside the entrance to the sanctuary. The left-hand wall displays the arrangement of stained-glass windows saved from the original Temple that was destroyed by fire in 1971. Photo by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin.



AMID THE ALIEN CORN BOOK COMMITTEE

EDITORIAL STAFF

Lisa Libman

Editor in Chief

Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin

Creative Director, Book Designer, Printing Liaison

Hilda Banks

Senior Copy Editor and Proofreader

COMMITTEE

Blair Kling	<i>History Editor</i>
Allen Avner	<i>Archivist, Consultant</i>
Al Davis	<i>Copy Editor</i>
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Fred Jaher	<i>Copy Editor of History Essays</i>
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Steve Glaser	<i>Graphics Consultant</i>
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Mira Hamburg	<i>Proofreader</i>
Susan Schomer	<i>Proofreader</i>
Elaine Avner	<i>Proofreader</i>
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Rabbi Norman Klein	<i>Ex-Officio, Advisor</i>

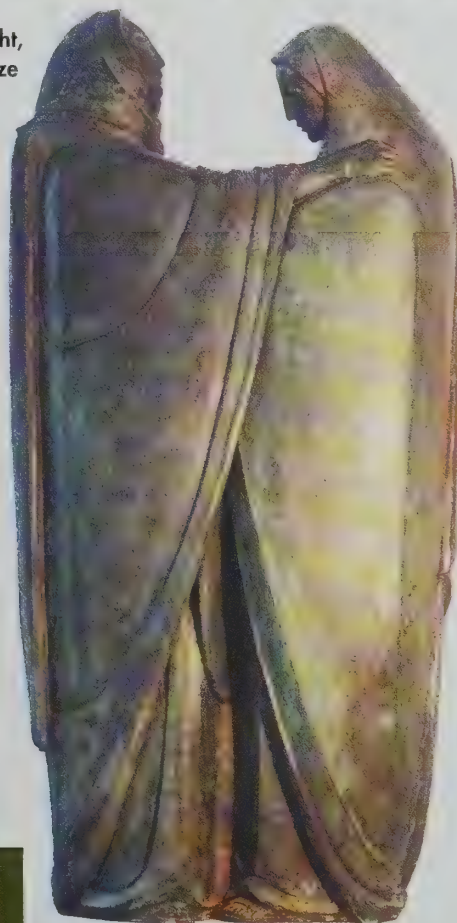
CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Allen Avner	Harry Liebersohn
Alice Berkson	Elizabeth Lipson
Edward M. Bruner	Joyce Meyer
Lisa Busjahn	Elizabeth Pleck
Reva Eggherman	Arthur Robinson
Natalie Frankenberg	Asa Rubenstein
Joseph Hamburg	Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin
Leonard Heumann	Susan Schomer
Miles Klein	Beri Schwitzer
Rabbi Norman Klein	Elizabeth Klein Shapiro
Blair Kling	Michael Shapiro
Charles Kozoll	Robert Silverman
Aaron Kurland	Esther Steinberg
Jewel Kurland	Blanche Sudman
Ezra Levin	Joyce Libman Tavill
Stanley Levy	Edward Tepper
Arthur Lewis	Michael Tepper
Lisa Lane Libman	Nancy Tepper



Artistic renditions of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. Picture at left is a woodcut illustration by Julius Schnoor Carolsfeld. The image is in the public domain.

At right,
a bronze
sculpture
of Ruth
and
Naomi
by
Naomi
Spiers.



Above, a colorful rendition of Ruth and Naomi by Marc Chagall.

Trailing Hesperis, and for many a time,
 I have half in love with careful weeds
 Call'd turn soft names in many a muscled thyme,
 To take into the air my painful breath
 Now, more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring thro' thy soul above
 In such an ecstasy—
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have heard you
~~But in vain~~
 For thy light yestern, become a sod.

The image above is the third page of four original handwritten pages of John Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," written in May 1819 along with three other of his famous lyric poems. The reference to Ruth "amid the alien corn" was the inspiration for this book's title.

Our Book's Title: An Explanation

by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin and Arthur Robinson

Title Credit: Arthur Robinson

In Asa Rubenstein's preface to his treatise on the history of Champaign-Urbana's Jewish community, he describes a common dilemma of Jews in the diaspora: simply put, to assimilate or not to assimilate. Whether by chance or divine providence, Sinai Temple's founders possessed a vision that precluded choosing between the two.

As Rubenstein explains, the first Jewish settlers in the Twin Cities, hailing mostly from German-speaking regions of Europe, were uniquely prepared to blend in with their non-Jewish neighbors while at the same time holding fast to their religious traditions. This is how they had lived in their homelands, but despite this adaptability, they were acutely aware that they were moving to a foreign land and into an alien culture—and aware as well that they would be seen by their new neighbors as aliens.

Undaunted, these Jews eventually migrated to central Illinois, a land of corn-fields and opportunity. Isolated from communities with larger Jewish populations, they embarked on a struggle to build their own viable, even vibrant Jewish community. Not unlike the Biblical Ruth, a widow from Moab who moved to the city of Bethlehem in Judea with her mother-in-law, Naomi, they hoped to build a life in a foreign environment.

Ruth had no idea what to expect of her new home and its people, but she was prepared to do her best to adapt while living far from family, friends, and all that was familiar. Ruth's story takes place in the times of the Judges when the memory of the conflicts before the Israelites entered the promised land was still comparatively fresh. In particular, the part played by Balak, King of Moab, in trying to destroy the Israelites was not forgotten. Even though Moses had promised the Moabites that the Israelites would not attack or disturb Moab, whose inhabitants were distant relatives as descendents of Lot, Balak had become a dangerous adversary.

The position of Ruth could, therefore, have been much more precarious than if she had just been any foreigner. However, Naomi's position as a well-connected, if poor, native and the growing recognition of Ruth's steadfast loyalty to Naomi and her commitment to the Israelite people and to their God eventually overcame any initial hostility to Ruth. Naomi's advice to Ruth when she went out to glean the barley as it was being harvested played a vital part in this process; she was to keep away from the farm boys and stay with the other women, modestly collecting what was left for the poor.

Dutifully, Ruth followed the directions of her mother-in-law. Unafraid of hard work, and certainly not demeaned by it, Ruth labors in the fields to support herself and her mother-in-law. John Keats, in his poem "Ode to a Nightingale," refers to Ruth and how she must have felt at this time of her life:

The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears *amid the alien corn*.

And so in the 1860s, like Ruth, Jews began to arrive in a strange, agricultural town in central Illinois, first in wagons, and then via the Illinois Central Railroad. Mostly peddlers, these early settlers soon became some of the most respected and successful merchants in the area, and Sinai Temple's organizers and leaders.

Throughout their struggle to establish a Jewish congregation, they must have at times longed for the familiarity and comfort of their homelands and "stood in tears amid the alien corn," as did Ruth.

They had brought with them the cherished faith of their fathers, great hope, and the strong will to build something better for themselves, their descendents, and the folks among whom they would live. They had the foresight to imagine that the Jewish community could engage in a symbiotic—even a synergistic—relationship with the larger community, and they had the courage to see that vision through to reality.

Today, the congregation of Sinai Temple is a warm and welcoming body of Jews of every form of tradition, all worshipping under one roof and one name—the fulfillment of the dream once held by those willing to stand amid the alien corn.

Bereshit:
In the
Beginning



Rabbi Yochanan Natan, *sofer* (scribe), beginning
our new Torah on February 7, 2004 at the Gala Dinner Event.
Photo by Illini Studio.

Preface

Searching through the Temple files one morning in the summer of 2001, Susan Schomer turned to me and said excitedly, "Lisa, this is fantastic, you have to see these articles on the fiftieth anniversary of Sinai Temple!" As I looked up she continued, "The Temple was incorporated in 1904; that means in three years we'll be 100 years old!" We agreed on the spot that we would have to plan for a celebration. Thus began our collaboration for Sinai Temple's centenary year of events.

Our initial focus was on the 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner Event: "Celebrating our past...Embracing our future" held on February 7, 2004, precisely 100 years to the day of the incorporation on February 7, 1904. Two members of our founding families, Ruth Kuhn Youngerman and Arthur Lewis, spoke movingly about their Jewish heritage and connection to Sinai Temple. The entertaining musical review, "West Sinai Story," written by talented members was received with joyous acclaim. A video was made to record the evening, and copies were made available to congregants in the gift shop.

We were moved to tears as the first line of our new Torah was written at the gala. The 250 members present viewed the beautiful calligraphy of *Beresbit* unfold via a live large-screen video presentation. It takes a year for a *sofer*, or scribe, to write a Torah. The generosity of a Temple member allowed us to commission a new Torah. We hired a *sofer* from Chicago, Rabbi Yochanan Natan, with the agreement that he would visit Champaign periodically throughout the year to teach us how a Torah is written. From the first line written at our gala event to the last line written in our sanctuary in March 2005, we have been blessed and moved to be a part of the experience.

The planning for the rest of the centenary year focused on a variety of activities designed to appeal to the wide spectrum of ages and inter-

ests of our members and to engage us both spiritually and materially. These included the writing of a Torah, the creation of a new Rabbi's Wall, the Myer Rosenfield Volunteer Plaque and Veterans Honor Roll Plaque, a history fair (the culmination of study by the Religious School students and genealogy study of their families), new courses for adults, an oral history videotape, a fun 50s dinner party and fund-raiser, and the development of this book. Each had a unique committee of individuals. Dozens of people have helped to shape all these projects, some of which are still in the works.

After casually saying at an early planning meeting, "Wouldn't it be cool to have a book to record our history?" I learned that the cliché "Beware what you wish for" has truth. It took over three years of work by dedicated volunteers to realize this dream. We are so fortunate to have such a varied and talented membership. Countless hours of time and creativity went into this project. Those who participated on the book committee taught me how to become an editor.

The anchor article of this compilation was written a few years after the Sinai Temple fire of 1971 and the loss of Temple records, when the Sholem family took the initiative to have our history recorded. Asa Rubenstein, then a University of Illinois graduate student of history, now a librarian at the New York Public Library and adjunct associate professor of history at Pace University in New York City, interviewed many of our Temple leaders and researched the early years of Sinai Temple's history. His revised manuscript was used for the first segment of this book, covering approximately 70 years. Blair Kling, professor emeritus of history at UIUC, read through the minutes of the last four decades, interviewed many people, wrote about the last 40 years of our history, and helped to coordinate the variety of texts and essays. Many of our authors, be they town or gown, were interested in researching and contributing pieces of our history for this book, each offering additional rich subtext.

The stories that have been shared by families who have been here over 50 years are wonderful vignettes that tell of lasting relationships, years of retailing establishments now closed, Jews coming to the university, interrelationships among families, and a sense of pride and accomplishment in living full, productive lives. Some of those stories are found within these covers and some are not. There are too many to include. At the gala dinner event we honored the families who are still members from the first 50 years who have helped to build our community. From the earliest years, they include the Youngerman, Lewis, Hamburg, Marco-Kurland, Berkson, Tepper, Brown-Caron, Gottschalk, Sholem, Simon, Davis, Silverman, Libman, Blum, Levin, Leavitt, Schwartz, Bankier-Booth, Dessen, Steinberg, Weissman, Wax, Morhaim, Weisel, Wachtel, Newman, and Sapoznik families. Their legacy sets the groundwork for the vibrant new families who have joined us and stimulated us with their creativity and ideals.

None of this could have happened without the initial bequest from the Milton and Zelda Derber family. Their children, Clara Derber Bloomfield and Charles Derber, had the vision to support the centennial year of events as a way to fulfill their parents' request to help promote love of Judaism at Sinai Temple. With their gift we were able to carry out the activities and develop the investment in our community. We are grateful for their generosity.



After the Temple fire in 1971, Jerome (Jerry) Sholem and his family were instrumental in collecting Sinai Temple's history into a written record. They tapped the talents of Asa Rubenstein, a graduate student of history at the time, who interviewed many of our Temple leaders, and researched the early years of Sinai Temple's history. *Photo courtesy of Sanford Sholem.*

As we celebrate our past, we look back to see who we are, where we came from, and what we have accomplished. We take stock in ourselves and start to dream about what we want to create, how we can grow, and how we can revitalize our community and ourselves. The sharing of our ideas, experiences, dreams, and goals helps to make Sinai Temple the place we want it to be as we embrace our future.

Lisa Lane Libman, July 2006

The Work of Heart and Hand

Three poems encompass the beauty of our historic journey. The first two by Mrs. Amelia Stern commemorate the dedication of our new Temple in 1918 (p. 31) and the 50th Anniversary in 1954 (p. 53). Elizabeth Klein composed a poem to celebrate our 100th Anniversary (p. 204), which evokes the essence of "This Century of Spirit."

Each of these poems brings into focus the strong emotions and sense of pride and commitment felt by generations of congregants as we again affirm our faith and love of Judaism.

Acknowledgments

The true success of an enterprise is the collaboration of committed and talented individuals. The fact that these are all people who generously volunteered their time is remarkable. It has been humbling to work with them. Their dedication and earnestness have been inspiring. We are indebted to all and wish each a resounding *Todah Rabah*, thank you for all you have done to enrich our lives.

Gala Dinner Event

Susan Schomer worked as my co-chair from the inception of the gala dinner event and throughout the year. She ably chaired the dinner committee with the trusty, competent group of Joan Kozoll, Carol Belber, Terri Gitler, Jan Sholem, and Amy Weisbach.

We were entertained at our social hour by Martin Laufhutte and Tamra Gingold. Our amazingly talented and lyrical "If you write it they will come" musical review writers for "West Sinai Story" were May Berenbaum, Marlene Goodfriend, Andrea Klein, Kate Kuper, Alex Scheeline, Sara Lampert Hoover, and Janie Yairi. The thematic concept was by May Berenbaum. Alex Scheeline was the musical director. Sara Lampert Hoover ably directed and produced

Centenary Committee Co-Chairperson Susan Schomer takes the mike to offer her welcome at the Gala Dinner Event, February 7, 2004. Photo courtesy of Illini Studio.



this fabulous review. We wish her much *mazel* with her move to the Broadway lights of New York City. The fabulous cast of characters included Judy Braunfeld, Andrea Klein, Kate Kuper, Daniel Lichtblau, Dorothy Scheeline, Beri Schwitzer, Michael Shapiro, Sasha Steinberg, Shira Stolarsky, and Janie Yairi.

The gala event booklet was the work of many. Thanks go to Steve Glaser and Elizabeth Lipson for their typography and page composition skills and endless hours of patient revision and to Liliya Bekker for her keyboarding of the ads. Terri Gitler and Al Davis provided eagle-eyed copyediting. Dori Walker developed the logo. Ben Halpern took the photo of the new ark door that was on the back cover. Susan Schomer served as a proofreader for the gala event brochure.

The excellent challah was the work of Tauby Shimkin, and the delicious desserts were thanks to our Sinai Temple bakers. Our gratitude goes to the Dessens for their superb photography. Videographers for the event were Pam and Mark Landsman. The cooperation and assistance of the Champaign Country Club staff, most notably Chris Collins and Alex May, made the evening go so well.

We are honored that Rabbi Yochanan Natan, the *sofer* (scribe) from Chicago, undertook the *mitzvah* to write a Torah, giving us this opportunity to fulfill the spiritual accomplishment of teaching our children Torah—the holy document that has enabled continuity of our Jewish people throughout time.

Centenary Year Accomplishments

We can be proud that Sinai Temple will have a Rabbi's Wall, a plaque honoring our veterans, and a plaque honoring our volunteers. Nancy Tepper worked to contact as many of our past Rabbis as possible to obtain a biogra-

phy and picture. The Arts and Acquisitions committee will complete the project of putting the pictures on a special display to honor the Rabbis who have served Sinai Temple.

The Veterans Honor Roll Plaque was first conceptualized when an old, dusty, hand-painted, wooden plaque emerged from the shed with the names of our WWII veterans. I asked Art and Charlotte Westle to chair a committee that would come up with a list of members who have served in our armed services and then create a plaque to which we could add names that would list by era those who have served. The committee consisted of Allen and Elaine Avner, Paula (may her memory be a blessing) and Wiley Deckard, Reva and Bill Eggherman, Bob and Bette Green, and Nicole Storch (may her memory be a blessing). A flyer went out and names and dates of service were obtained. Allen Avner, the keeper of lists at Sinai Temple, made it more complete. Nicole Storch did the legwork to

have the old plaque restored. A new one, incorporating all our veterans, is yet to be made.

Myer Rosenfield was a much-beloved member of our community who gave of himself tirelessly over the years. After he passed away, his wife Eva helped to organize a recognition program in his memory. Each year several members of our temple are honored for their service. The Myer Rosenfield Volunteer Recognition Plaque was put together by Eva Rosenfield and Steve Scher with the

expectation that each year the names of the new honorees will be added.

The chair of the Arts and Acquisitions committee, Aaron Averbuch,

volunteered to take pictures of Sinai Temple's artwork for three purposes. One was to have a complete updated record for our inventory and for insurance purposes. Another was to create a visual guide of some sort for our members and guests. Lastly, some of the pictures he and Liliya Bekker took grace this book.

Diana Lenik and Lisa Busjahn videotaped personal insights and stories of Ruth Youngerman, Edythe Davis, Esther Steinberg, Beverly Caron, Judge Ann Einhorn, and Alice Berkson. The CD is available in our library.

Swinging Through the Sinai Century: The 50s Dinner Dance

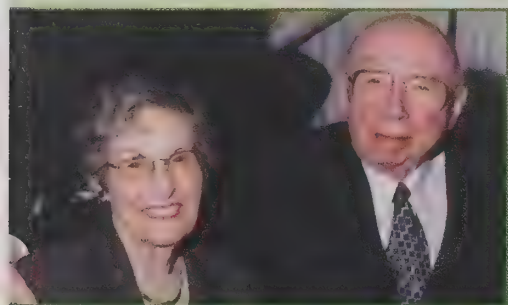
To culminate the centenary year's events, the committee decided to "split the difference" and planned a fun 50s party replete with classic foods from that era. It included a history fair organized by the Religious School; an auction chaired by Marcie Wiener and Carol Belber; historical vignettes written by Blair Kling and Sherry Steigmann and performed by a large and talented cast to a delighted audience; and dinner chaired by Rae Spooner and Pat Dessen. Chaired by Alice Berkson and Amy Weisbach with an active committee of two dozen or more volunteers, the evening was fun, entertaining, and financially successful.

Amid the Alien Corn: 100 Years of Sinai Temple in Champaign, Illinois

Ignorance is bliss. Had I known what went into the work of editing a book I might not have taken this on so easily. However, since so many of the people involved are professionals in their fields, their corresponding volunteer work for this book made it happen seam-



Rabbi Norman Klein, Eva Rosenfield, Paula Deckard, and Dan Smith visiting before dinner is served at the Gala Event. Photo courtesy of Illini Studio.



Norma and Arthur Lewis enjoyed the Gala Dinner Event festivities from their well-deserved, front-row seats. Photo courtesy of Illini Studio.

lessly (mostly), with the exception of some very slippery deadlines.

The book committee included Aaron Averbuch, Allen Avner, Hilda

Banks, Al Davis, Terri Gitler, Steve Glaser, Fred Jaher, Blair Kling, Elizabeth Lipson, Art Robinson, Susie Hamburg H. Sarapin, Susan Schomer, and Dori Walker. Rabbi Klein and Blanche Sudman were ad hoc members. They attended numerous meetings, taught me how a book is put together and did the work to make it come together.

Blair Kling, professor emeritus of history, chaired the history committee and coordinated the various authors while preparing for and writing the history of the last 50 years. We worked closely together, and I value his insight and clarity. Fred Jaher edited the essays by Rubenstein, Kling, and Bruner. Al Davis developed our style sheet, incorporated Fred's edits, reviewed all the text and handed it off to Susie Hamburg H. Sarapin, our book designer. A new phase of copyediting and the incorporation of textual and graphic changes began. Hilda Banks copyedited five revisions tirelessly, patiently, and with a keen and experienced eye, verifying numerous details with authors along the way. Special thanks go to Hilda for her caring devotion to this project. What we didn't have was a typesetter and someone who could key in the multitudes of changes and edits that occurred in the revisions, so that fell to Susie. Mira Hamburg assisted Susie in making some of the editing changes. Final proofreadings by Hilda Banks, Elaine Avner, and Susan Schomer completed the effort.

Photographs tell the story well. Credit for many photos are due to the Dessens and Illini Studio. We owe a debt of gratitude to both generations, Loretta and Ed Dessen (may his memory be a blessing) and Pat and Jon

Dessen for their years of superb photographic contributions to the Temple and to this book. Ben Halpern, Aaron Averbuch, Liliya Bekker, Dori Gordon Walker, Ray Spooner, and Susie Hamburg H. Sarapin have all provided photos. Steve Glaser provided professional electronic retouching of many older photographs. Other pictures and local newspaper clippings came from the Sisterhood archives and the private collection of many members.

Exceptional appreciation and recognition are due to Susie Hamburg H. Sarapin. Born and raised here she was drawn to the project and volunteered her professional expertise as a book designer. Between getting married, moving to Indiana, and fulfilling her professional obligations, Susie crafted this book. Not only did she contribute as an author, researcher, photographer, typesetter, and printing liason, but in fact became the creative director. This book's beauty and design is Susie's inspiration—a work of love, heart, and soul.

Unsung Heroes

Many projects at the Temple have the quiet and unassuming support and help of Allen and Elaine Avner. Their attention to detail, their loving care of the Temple and their subtle sense of humor make them invaluable. The Avners exemplify *gemilut hasidim*, goodwill to one another through their selfless acts of *tzedakah* to Sinai Temple.

Appreciation goes to our Temple staff for their assistance in so many ways, from Yvona Vlach and Eva Rosenfield to Beri Schwitzer and Rabbi Norman Klein. They invest their lives into their work, and the Temple runs as well as it does due to their attention and devotion. These acknowledgments would not be complete without mentioning that the Sinai Temple Board of Trustees has encouraged and promoted the centennial year of activities and the publication of this book with its wisdom and support.



At left: The Yad Vashem triptych donated by Mr. and Mrs. Leon Bankier in loving memory of their families and others lost in the Holocaust (1978).

Artist: Charles Clements, Tucson, Arizona.

Panel 1: The English text reads: "I have taken an oath to remember it all. Not once to forget! Lest from this we have learned nothing." The graphic shows flames engulfing a Magen David. Beneath it, hands push futilely at a partially seen Nazi emblem.

Panel 2: Flames threaten to consume a Magen David, while a wall at the right remains unscathed. Beneath it, is the opening of an oven. There is a niche for the candles that represent the 6 million lost. The Hebrew is the first line of the Kaddish prayer.

Panel 3: Another wall and more flames. Upper text: "Dedicated to the Jews who died in the Nazi Holocaust, 1939-1945." Lower text: Names of some of the death camps: Auschwitz, Treblinka, Buchenwald, Teresienstadt, Dachau, Maidanek, Bergen-Belsen.

Medium is hammered copper. American Contemporary, 1976. Image courtesy of Aaron Averbuch.

"Yet despite the evil of the Holocaust, it was the evil itself that also showed me the miracle of those individual acts of kindness and courage under the most difficult conditions, acts that renewed my faith in God and humanity. The light of my faith, although sometimes dimmed, was never extinguished. I survived not only through luck and persistence but also because here and there, in the midst of hell, someone cared for me. Someone gave me a piece of bread after a beating. Someone gave me his winter coat on a frigid night. Someone stretched out his hand."

The Narrow Bridge: Beyond the Holocaust by Isaac Neuman with Michael Palencia-Roth

Isaac Neuman is Rabbi Emeritus of Sinai Temple

Below: The Einhorn Garden provides a quiet area to sit, relax, and enjoy the outdoors at Sinai Temple. It enhances the view from the east windows of the Davis Chapel. *Photo by Aaron Averbuch.*



Above: A photographic collage by Ray Spooner. *Photo by Aaron Averbuch.*

Part I

Temple History



Celebration in 1954 to honor the 50th anniversary of the founding of Sinai Temple. Photo by Illini Studio.

MIDWESTERN JEWISH COMMITMENT AND PRACTICAL AMERICAN IDEALISM

The History of Sinai Temple to 1976

by Asa Rubenstein

Preface

Centuries ago, the great Rabbi Hillel stated a truth that we Jews have confronted throughout our history: If we are not for ourselves, who will be for us; but if we are only for ourselves, what are we? Jews living in the Diaspora have all too often interpreted this truth as a dilemma requiring us either to separate ourselves as much as possible from the non-Jews around us or to deny all distinctions between ourselves and other peoples who worship the same God and profess the same moral principles. However, we Jews sometimes have found ourselves in places where we and some of our neighbors have perceived that the vitality of Judaism enhances, and also depends on, our full involvement in the common effort to improve the quality of human life everywhere. Such a task requires a willingness on our part not only to teach, but to learn from others. This interpretation of the ancient rabbi's teaching was the creed of the Jews in Champaign and Urbana, Illinois, who contributed greatly to the development of both communities and the University of Illinois. At the same time, they waged an uphill battle from 1860 to the present to establish and maintain a synagogue with a full-time rabbi, as well as other institutions, to meet the special needs of Jews in town and on campus. Their story is the subject of this essay.

Before beginning, I acknowledge that the idea for this account came from the late Jerome J. Sholem, a civic leader, retired businessman, and

former journalist. As early as 1962, he had decided to write the history of Sinai Temple. In a letter to Rabbi Martin M. Perley (one of a series of student rabbis who served under Dr. Abram Sachar at Hillel and Sinai Temple from the mid-1920s to the mid-1940s) on August 23, 1966, Mr. Sholem defined the subject of the present work in the following way:

Since my retirement last year from active participation in the retail shoe business (my sons having taken over that business), I am striving to find a useful outlet for my energy.

This summer I have started compilation of a book I am writing to preserve memories of the years which have gone into the building of Champaign's Sinai Congregation. "It's later than we think" they say, and so much water has gone over the dam that the younger generations and many newcomers who light on our campus so easily take for granted all the religious facilities here, that few of them have any knowledge at all of the blood, sweat, tears, and money that made Sinai Congregation possible today. For example, the other day I was amazed to discover how few adults and residents who, over 20 years, ever knew or heard of the people whose names appear below the stained glass windows. This is so typical of the fast-moving age in which we live, that I thought it might be appropriate to TRY TO preserve some of the memories and highlights of the Jewish history of our community.

Using what is still left of the minutes of the Trustee Meetings as a base from which to work and as a rough outline, I am attempting to piece together and reconstruct a flashback of what went on in our Jewish community: the conflicts; the difference of opinions; the ever-present competition between the Orthodox group and the Reform members; the rivalry between "town" and "gown" Champaign-Urbana Jews, their contributions to the community in general, as well as to the University of Illinois' development; the cooperation (or maybe lack of cooperation) between the Sinai Congregation and Hillel Foundation; the growth of the Sunday School classes; the persistent effort of certain individual Jewish leaders to have themselves or their group reelected

to the Board; and the ever-persistent question of "How 'Reformed' shall be our Temple policy?"

In the same letter, he asked Rabbi Perley to search his "Memories of How I Found and How I Left Sinai During My Stay in Champaign" for information on the above topics. Mr. Sholem, and his wife, Faye, repeated the same request in letters to Dr. Sachar, Rabbi Perley's predecessors and successors at Sinai (including Rabbis Bernard Martin, the Congregation's first full-time rabbi, and Henry Cohen) and individuals who no longer lived in the community but had been active in the Congregation or had information about the activities of others. In the course of his painstaking research, Mr. Sholem also gathered newspaper clippings, photographs, and a variety of manuscripts. After a fire destroyed Sinai Temple's old building at Clark and State Streets on January 5, 1971, he took extensive notes from the salvaged fragments of torn and singed pages of the "Minutes of Sinai Hebrew Congregation" covering several trustees meetings from 1904 to 1916. These notes are the sole record we have of the Congregation's early "Minutes" because the barely legible fragments have disappeared, along with the framed photographs (which had also survived the fire) of the Congregation's past presidents.



Jewish Ladies Social Circle at an 1895 gathering at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Fisher of Homer, Illinois.

In the brief period between his retirement and death, Mr. Sholem did not write anything more than a useful four-page summary of the results of his research. A serious heart attack, as well as his intensive efforts to improve the Twin Cities' commercial, mass transit, and recreational facilities, prevented him from devoting full time to the completion of his history until late 1974. At that time, Faye accompanied him to Florida, where he took his research material for the purpose of writing a full-length draft while vacationing. Unfortunately, Jerry became seriously ill that December and returned with his wife to Champaign, where he died on January 31, 1975. It was left to Faye to see that the project be continued by someone else.

Mrs. Ann Hymowitz continued the work on Mr. Sholem's project until autumn 1976, when her responsibilities forced her to relinquish the task to me, a doctoral candidate and teaching assistant in American history at the university. Mrs. Hymowitz, and especially Mrs. Sholem and her friends (including Sol Cohen), contributed to this work by gathering additional written sources and taping interviews with leaders like Dr. Sachar, Leonard Lewis, and families of the Congregation's founders and early members. The manuscripts collected by this group include the "Minutes" from 1889 to 1891, and from 1894 to 1920, of the Jewish Ladies Social Circle (originally named the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society, the parent of Sinai Temple's Sisterhood), and the Social Circle's Treasurer's Book covering the years 1889 to 1891 and 1894 to 1902. I am grateful to the late Mr. Sholem, and to Mrs. Sholem and their friends, for the sources at my disposal. This work has also benefited from the advice and criticism of Mrs. Ruth Berkson, wife of the late Dr. Ralph Berkson, one of Sinai's presidents. She is a native of Champaign whose parents (Professor and Mrs. Armin Koller), like herself, were involved in the Congregation, local Zionist organizations, and Jewish activities on campus, mostly those of the Hillel Foundation. This work has also bene-

fited from the information and advice provided by Mrs. Helen Loeb, Mrs. Ruth Youngerman, Sol Cohen, and other members of Sinai Temple. I thank Mr. Maynard Brichford, University Archivist, for steering me to the papers of Professor Simon Litman at the University Archives. If it had not been for the editorial assistance and persistence of my wife, Pamela Silver Rubenstein, it would have taken a lot longer to finish this work. Here I should especially acknowledge the editing and proofreading of Terry Maher, which have enhanced this manuscript's readability. Finally, we are all indebted to Mrs. Faye Sholem for her determination in having her late husband's work completed and her support for its preparation and publication in his memory.

In acknowledging the support of those who helped me so much, I must, however, explain that the opinions expressed in this work are solely from my own interpretation of the oral and written data available to me. I regret that limitations of time and data prevented me from mentioning other Congregation members who also gave, or are still giving, to Sinai Temple. With all due apologies, I hope this work will be a worthy memorial to all of Sinai's builders, including those unmentioned, and an inspiration to future generations of Jews in Champaign-Urbana and elsewhere.

Asa Rubenstein, 1979

I. Birth of a Congregation

The coming of the Illinois Central Railroad in the 1850s accelerated the development of West Urbana (which eventually became the separate town of Champaign), transformed the present Twin City area into a valuable crossroads for the commercial grain farmers, and consequently created new economic oppor-

tunities for the enterprising Jewish merchants whose families laid the foundations of Sinai Congregation and provided most of its leadership until the late 1950s. Prior to their arrival the earliest Jewish residents generally migrated from German-speaking areas of Europe and immediately proceeded to other towns west of the Appalachians, or occasionally south of the Mason-Dixon line. Paradoxically, they all prided themselves on their ability to assimilate to the ways of non-Jewish neighbors while clinging proudly to their ancient religious heritage. European backgrounds prepared these mostly German Jews to participate in American life. Their secular education in the same gymnasia as non-Jews, as well as their involvement with non-Jews in the same political and economic struggles of the old country, made them receptive to American values of political liberty, economic freedom, and universal brotherhood. A slender religious knowledge motivated them nonetheless to transmit some traditions of their forefathers to their children, who grew up in a rural environment barren of urban Jewish cultural influ-



Champaign was founded in 1855 when the Illinois Central Railroad laid its track two miles west of downtown Urbana.

ences. Although physically isolated from large centers of Jewish population, the first Jewish residents of Champaign and Urbana maintained close ties with one another, with similarly isolated Jews in neighboring towns like Tolono, Danville, Springfield, Bloomington, and Kankakee, and often with family, old friends, and synagogues in Chicago, Cincinnati, and several towns in Indiana. Nevertheless, a brief survey of the activities of the Jewish community's early leaders shows why they discerned no distinction between their Americanism and their Judaism.

Abe Stern, the earliest known Jewish resident of Champaign, must have sensed a common destiny with Americans of other faiths and national origins when the completion of the Illinois Central Railroad enabled this typical unsettled Jewish peddler to become an established retailer. After he left Germany in 1857, Abe stopped first in Cincinnati and then proceeded to Farmer City, Illinois, where his brother Nathan resided. For three years, Abe peddled dry goods from his brother's store in Farmer City to customers in Champaign before establishing a business in partnership with Nathan in Champaign in 1861, at 23 Main Street (now a parking lot for the First National Bank).

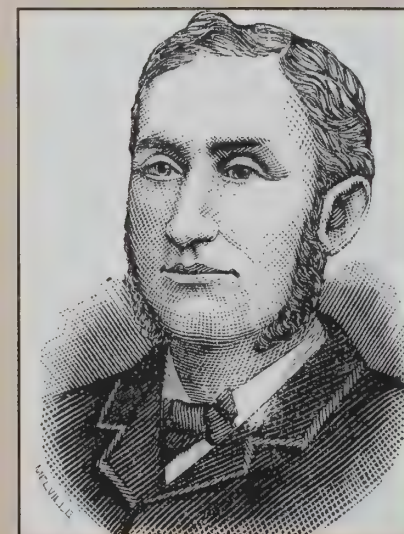
Abe became involved in the local B'nai B'rith Grand Prairie Lodge No. 281 and in the founding of Sinai Congregation. His wife, Babette Bloch Stern, another immigrant from Germany, belonged to the Jewish Ladies Social Circle.

The Sterns' sons, Walter and Albert Leland, their daughter Delia, and Albert's wife, Amelia Alpinier, also played important roles in building Sinai Temple and in developing important social services for the towns and the campus. Walter Stern became a respected banker and as a leading member of Sinai often devoted his financial services and influence to its welfare. Delia Stern married Royal A. Stipes, a member of one of

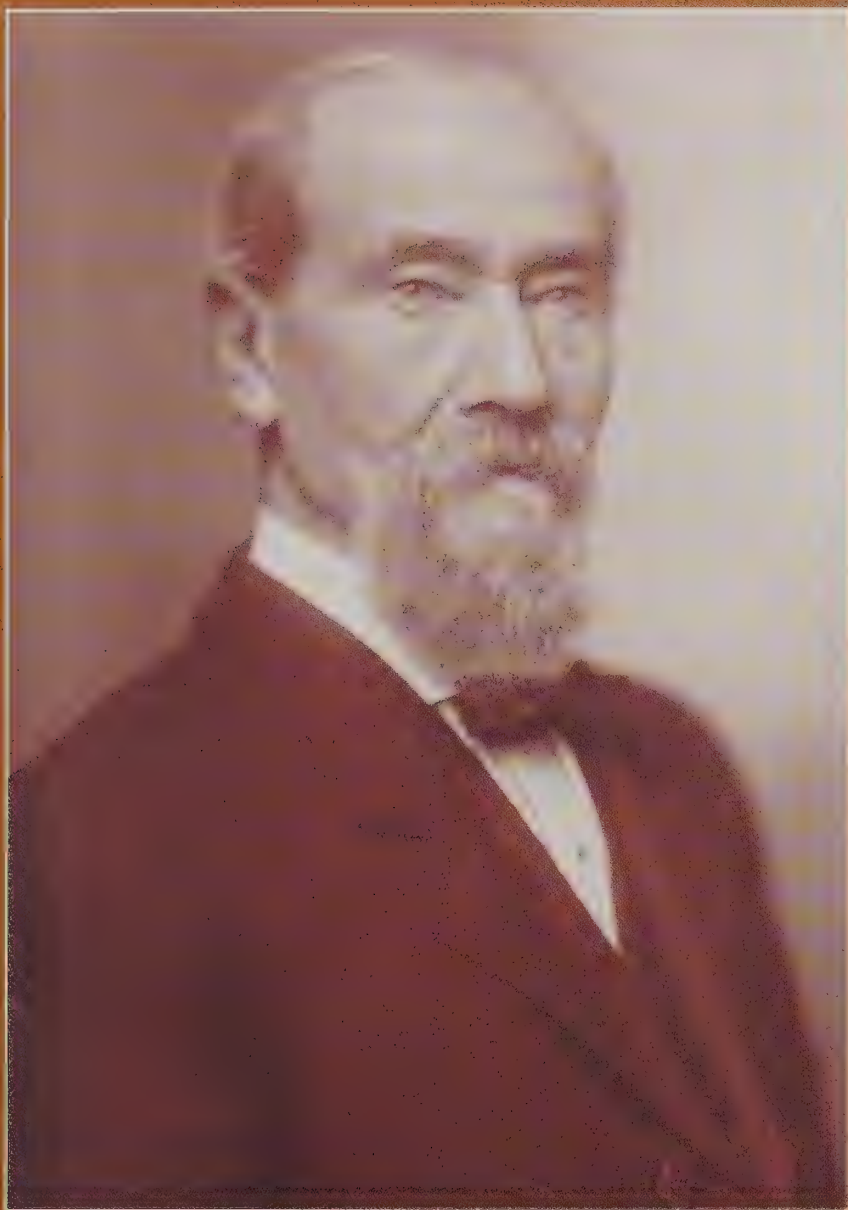
Champaign-Urbana's most respected Christian families, and became active in the Jewish Ladies Social Circle. Albert Stern served the community as a founder and leader of Sinai Congregation, a member of the Champaign Chamber of Commerce, and a charter member of the Champaign Elks Lodge No. 398. His wife, Amelia (daughter of Solomon and Henrietta Alpinier of Kankakee), was the first Jewish co-ed at the university to receive her degree after three years. Her tremendous energy and her literary and organizational talents, which eventually made her one of Sinai Congregation's and Champaign County's most important women, had already impressed fellow students, who elected her class poet and worked with her in founding the Eta Chapter of the sorority Pi Beta Phi. After graduation, she taught school in Kankakee, worked as a journalist, and contributed articles for several children's publications before attending classes in Germany at the Berlin University from 1899 to 1900. She and Albert wed on April 30, 1901.

The next influential family in Sinai's early history came to Urbana on August 15, 1864, when Morris Lowenstern arrived with his widowed father, Philip, to operate a dry goods store owned by a Mr. Sills of Stanford, Kentucky. In 1857, at age 21, Morris had emigrated with his sister and widowed father from Hanover, Germany. In 1865, Morris purchased Mr. Sills' share of the store; in the same year his wife (an immigrant from Bavaria)

gave birth to their first child, Monroe. Morris started his long-term efforts to boost Urbana's development by buying the block occupied by his store.



Morris Lowenstern, one of the earliest Jewish settlers in Urbana, is an ancestor of current Temple member Mary Perlstein.



Joseph Kuhn was an early Jewish settler of Champaign-Urbana. After fighting for the Union during the Civil War, Joseph resided in Woodville, Mississippi; sometime in 1865 or afterward, he went north with the Loeb's through Kentucky and then to Covington, Indiana, before establishing his first clothing store in Champaign. He was the father of Isaac Kuhn. Photo courtesy of Ruth Youngerman.

He expressed confidence in Urbana's future by purchasing 80 feet of property just west of that block, where he anticipated the erection of a hotel. Since the day he established himself, he helped newcomers start businesses in Urbana and invested in any venture that could spur the community's economic growth. In 1881, Morris expanded his store by adding a clothing department to his dry goods stock. By 1886, when Morris made his son a partner and renamed the store M. Lowenstern, Son & Co., his reputation for honesty had enabled him to increase his trade steadily until the business eventually occupied a three-story double building on the southwest corner of Main and Race Streets—this became the most popular dry goods and clothing store in Champaign County.

Morris remained active in local Jewish affairs, especially in the founding of Sinai Congregation. His son, Monroe, and youngest daughter, Belle, played more important roles in Sinai's early history than daughters Amanda and Jennie. As children, Monroe, Belle, and Jennie worked in their father's store. Amanda studied piano and attended Urbana High School, graduating in 1884, and became a musician. Monroe helped found Sinai Congregation in 1904 and remained a prominent member until his death thirty years later. He continued his father's work of raising local money for such distant Jewish causes as the Jewish Orphan Asylum in Cleveland. Monroe and his wife, Barbara Alsfelder, inspired their own children, Morris, Phil, and Selma, to become active in Sinai Temple and, later, the Hillel Foundation. Belle belonged to the Jewish Ladies Social Circle and married Harry Levinsohn, a clothing-store owner and another founder and leading member of Sinai Congregation.

Intermarriage between families of prominent Jewish clothing merchants became common during their residence in Champaign and Urbana and occasionally preceded it. Indeed, the next important family to arrive here, Joseph Kuhn's, was closely related to that of Abraham Loeb (a later resident). Before both families left Germany, Joseph had

married Lena Loeb. In 1852, at age seventeen, he emigrated with the Loeb. After fighting for the Union during the Civil War, Joseph resided in Woodville, Mississippi; sometime in 1865 or afterward, he went north with the Loeb through Kentucky and then to Covington, Indiana, before establishing his first store in Champaign. He chose a location as near to the railroad station as the present building on Main Street is today. Like Abe Stern and Morris Lowenstern, he took advantage of the economic opportunity provided by the Illinois Central Railroad. Joseph was also typical of an idealistic generation (including non-Jews such as Franz Sigel and Carl Schurz) who fled Germany after the collapse of the 1848 revolution and fought more successfully for the same liberal and democratic values on the battlefields and political arenas of the United States. Like German Jews elsewhere in America, he sought close contact for himself and his offspring with Catholic and Protestant German-Americans who shared his taste for the secular culture of the old country.

In 1866, shortly after arriving here, Joseph's son Isaac was born. As a result of his upbringing, Isaac epitomized the paradoxical character of the native midwestern Jews who dominated the affairs of Sinai Congregation during its first half-century. Under his father's influence, Isaac practiced the religion of his ancestors while tolerating dissent from his strongly articulated views. He became Sinai's principal financier and a nationally prominent philanthropist, as well as a pillar of Reform Judaism and a Jewish elder statesman. A dignified, businesslike manner often disguised his humor as well as his religious and political sentiments. Although he socialized less easily than some fellow leaders of Sinai (such as the Stern brothers), his conception of an American Jewish community was broader than theirs, for he envisioned a congregation serving not only the townspeople, but also the university students and faculty—not only Reform, but also Conservative and even Orthodox Jews. Concern for his dignity might explain his customary distaste for



Kuhn's store can be seen halfway down the block on the right on Champaign's Main Street in the 1890s. Vriner's Soda shop can be seen at right in foreground.

dancing or playing bridge, but it certainly did not hinder him from sharing his father's belief in free enterprise and liberal democracy. As a matter of fact, Isaac edited a book portraying his father's hero, Abraham Lincoln, as a great humanitarian reformer, and he himself took moderately progressive stands on important socioeconomic issues, often differing sharply from the conservative views of many fellow businessmen throughout the country. For many years, Isaac was the foremost figure in the Congregation and even influenced it to ban smoking and card playing from the Temple. His sense of propriety enabled him to remain devoted to Sinai and his vision of it when other members successfully opposed him.

Like the other midwestern founders of Sinai Congregation, Isaac Kuhn had not only the social advantages, but also the religious disadvantages, of growing up in a relatively open community with few Jewish children and no institutions of Jewish learning. Such an environment encouraged him to mingle with neighbors of other faiths in school, busi-

ness, and the country club, but discouraged him from learning much about his own religion. Fortunately, like other Jewish immigrants who came to Champaign and Urbana, Joseph Kuhn had encouraged his son to be proud of his Jewish heritage and acquire at least a modest knowledge of Judaism. Isaac's foresight in religious issues affecting his congregation was indeed remarkable because his formal Jewish education consisted only of one year's instruction prior to Bar Mitzvah at Isaac M. Wise's Reform synagogue in Cincinnati, where Joseph had sent him in 1878 to stay with family friends while studying German and learning the rudiments of Hebrew and Judaism. According to Isaac's daughter, Ruth Youngerman, he retained only a knowledge of the Hebrew alphabet and a modicum of Jewish history and rituals. Nonetheless, commitment to his heritage impelled him to join Champaign-Urbana's B'nai B'rith lodge in 1887 and help found Sinai Temple. Those of us who had regular religious instruction from early childhood through adolescence can marvel at how much Isaac Kuhn and other Jews like him accomplished without such an advantage.

His secular education was quite another story. In 1872, Joseph sent Isaac to a predominantly German Catholic and Protestant grammar school. Isaac had trouble getting along there and did not go beyond high school. Instead, Joseph sent him to New York, where he stayed with relatives and worked in hat stores before going into business with his father in Champaign. The continued success of the family business under Isaac's control enabled his benevolence, most of it anonymous. He was an effective organizer and gained national recognition for his long-term support of the Hebrew Union College and his participation in B'nai B'rith (especially in the creation of the local Hillel Foundation and its establishment on campuses throughout the country).

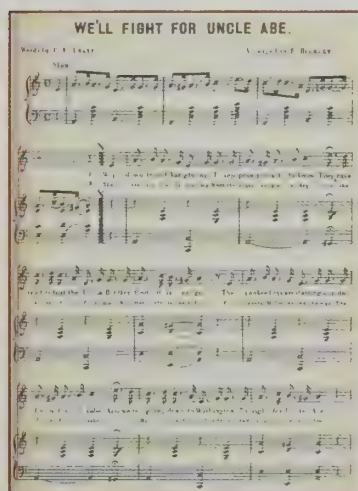
One of Joseph Kuhn's rivals in business was another early Jewish settler from Germany, Solomon Bernstein, who owned clothing stores in Urbana and Champaign. A feud eventually developed between the astute

businessman, Mr. Kuhn, and the studious dreamer, Mr. Bernstein. The latter became important in Sinai's early history mainly because he permitted his daughter, Addie, to marry Nat H. Cohen in 1880. Prior to settling in Champaign in 1878, Nat Cohen's background prepared him to get along well with Jews and non-Jews. His father, Simeon Cohen, a miniaturist and businessman, was a Sephardic Jew born in England. He returned to London to find a second wife after the death of his first. The second wife, Simcha Sebag-Montefiore, came from a distinguished Sephardic family that had lived in London for generations. After their marriage, they returned to America. Both parents were proud of their Sephardic descent and were observant of Jewish rituals, especially Kashruth. Three years after his birth in Philadelphia, in 1851, Nat's father brought the family to Cincinnati and opened one of America's first lead-pencil factories. Nat, who later became a cigar maker and businessman, inherited ingenuity, artistry, and resourcefulness from a father who had to build by hand the equipment required for his factory. At an early age, Nat displayed the qualities of musician, ambitious businessman, and public-spirited citizen. As a boy during the Civil War, Nat supported the Union cause by helping women gather material for bandages and by accompanying his brother's wife with a drum at military recruiting stations. Undoubtedly, he identified with another brother, Isaac, who enlisted in a volunteer regiment from Indianapolis. During the war, Nat formed business partnerships with friends, who would peddle small amounts of goods for a profit. As a teenager, he completed one year of valuable, but monetarily disappointing, apprenticeship with a cigar maker in Cincinnati and then worked in that trade in Indianapolis before joining two brothers in Chicago, where he found a similar job.

His parents went to Chicago in 1866, and Nat moved among cigar-making jobs in that city, Peoria, Ottawa, Kankakee, and South Bend. The Chicago fire of October 1871 lured him back not only to assist his fami-

ly, who had lost everything except his mother's relics, but also to buy out Levi Solomon's tobacco business on the city's west side, which flourished because of the influx of people from the devastated north and south sides. His decision to set up a cigar stand in front of the Marble Pillar saloon near Hooley's Theater on Randolph Street led Nat to a brief career of singing and acting in Chicago and on the West Coast with the Hooley Minstrels, the amateur Mulder-Fabbri Opera Company, and with such premier performers as Adelaide Nelson, James O'Neil, David Belasco, the violinist Emil Sauret, and Sauret's wife, the pianist Teresa Carrezo.

After retiring from the stage in July 1878, Nat wrote to an acquaintance, Sam Epstein, who offered him a job in his factory in Champaign. Almost immediately upon arrival, Nat impressed prominent Jewish and non-Jewish families with his singing, which was rare in a community



This is possibly one of the popular Civil War songs Nat Cohen sang with the Republican Glee Club at political rallies.

that had few singers with any professional experience. Early informal singing appearances at Hempel's saloon on Market Street, a "hangout" in Champaign for local businessmen and politicians, led to regular performances with the Republican Party's Glee Club at political rallies during the election of 1878 and all campaigns for the next twenty years. In 1878, James G. Blaine and Benjamin Harrison, future contenders for the presidency, as well as such important Illinois leaders as John A. Logan and Governor Richard Oglesby, heard Nat and the Republican Glee Club sing Civil

War songs. Nat consequently gained the friendship of Congressman Joe Cannon, Judge Francis M. Wright (an important member of Champaign

County's Republican Central Committee), and other influential politicians in the state. Moreover, his musical interests led to his first meeting with his future wife, Addie Bernstein, when he was looking for a soprano with whom he could sing an Italian duet at a country club gathering in Barrett Hall in December 1878. In the following year, Nat became active in the local B'nai B'rith lodge and bought out Moses Epstein's cigar store in Urbana. By working long hours every day to get out of debt, he gained Sol Bernstein's permission in 1880 to come to his new home in Napoleon, Ohio, to marry his daughter. During the next forty-five years, this couple helped strengthen Jewish religious institutions and improve the quality of life for adherents of all faiths in Champaign-Urbana and throughout Illinois. Although their musical and acting talents made them seem more colorful than most Jewish couples in the community, Nat and Addie did not differ from them in their successful attempt to harmonize religious and secular commitments.

The marriage enhanced Addie's previous reputation as a Midwestern Jenny Lind and Nat's prestige in the community. They brought beauty and grace to their concerts and social gatherings, and as more people became acquainted with their singing and fine manners, the market for Nat's cigars increased and he expanded his cigar store into a factory. Soon, hands other than his own were making and packing thousands of Bouquet cigars, which he sold on the road throughout central Illinois. In a few years, he relocated his business to a two-story building, which had a lower floor for three storerooms and an upper story for his factory; the new site was a lot that he purchased near the railroad from the wife of the railroad promoter, W. H. Smith. Nat's long years of service to the Republican Party and a newly acquired expertise in fish conservation enabled his friends Judge Francis M. Wright and State Auditor James H. McCullough to secure from Governor John Tanner an appointment to the Illinois Fish Commission on March 18, 1897. This commission's three

unsalaried members also included its founder, Colonel S. P. Bartlett. Nat was soon elected president of the commission and served in that capacity until 1911.

Nat and Addie's secular activities did not impede their involvement in the movement among local Jewish families to unite themselves into a meaningful religious community. In their home, the Cohens provided a

healthy Jewish environment, which encouraged their musically gifted sons, Julius and Sol, to use their talents for the benefit of Sinai Congregation as well as for the gratification of a more general public. In the 1890s, when Jews in Champaign-Urbana were meeting in one another's homes or in specially rented halls for regular High Holy Day and occasional Sunday Sabbath services, Nat and Addie would sing for them. At



The photo above and the following caption come from *Years of Pilgrimage*, Sol B. Cohen's memoir. "A musical evening at the Cohens' house at the turn of the century. From left: Addie Cohen, Sydney, Sol, Julius, and Nat H. Cohen."

first they performed alone, later adding the accompaniment of Julius's voice; within a decade, Sol's violin playing also joined them. On October 23, 1902, the Jewish Ladies Social Circle officially thanked Nat, Addie, and Sol, as well as Mr. Fay and Mrs. Alsfelder, for music on the Day of Atonement. Their singing, money, and social graces made Nat and Addie indispensable members of the local B'nai B'rith lodge and the Jewish Ladies Social Circle (respectively), which separately and jointly pioneered some of Sinai Temple's important functions. Today, we must include Addie and other members of the Ladies Social Circle among the founders of the Congregation, although the charter mentions only their husbands, fathers, and brothers.

Like Nat and Addie, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Eisner were prominent in Sinai Congregation and in the economic and social life of Champaign-Urbana. The Eisners were close friends with the Cohens. Almost as soon as Nat arrived in Champaign, he became friendly with Albert Eisner, then a young, unmarried immigrant from Hungary working at Eichberg's dry goods store. In recently published reminiscences of 1920, Nat Cohen suggested that his friend's image in the community in 1878 was not consistent with his reputation today as the upstanding grocer whose store eventually evolved under his son's management into a chain of forty supermarkets. In his younger days, Albert Eisner seemed carefree: a genial fellow with a light heart and near always a flat pocketbook except on payday, at the end of the month. He was always ready for a practical joke.

Nevertheless, Albert was eager to settle down, not wishing to imitate Nat by postponing marriage until he could find an eligible Jewish woman in a community where they were scarce. He married Katherine Kariher, a Methodist, who transmitted her creed to their offspring, although she assumed an active role in the Jewish Ladies

Social Circle. Her activities there paralleled her husband's involvement in the local B'nai B'rith lodge, which he and Nat had joined as bachelors in 1878. Later, Albert became a founder and active member of Sinai Congregation.

By 1900, the small group of Jewish families in Champaign-Urbana also included those of Abraham Loeb, Jacob and Hattie Kaufman, Wolf Lewis, and Sam Reuler. Just before the birth of his son Charles in 1884, Abraham Loeb, the only elected Democratic official in Tolono, decided to move his clothing store to Main Street in Urbana. Abraham became a founder of Sinai Congregation and the first Jew in Champaign County repeatedly elected as county supervisor. His youngest son, Charles, who



recited Chautauqua speeches verbatim, played football for Urbana High School and assumed many family burdens at an early age. After graduating, Charles worked as a cashier in the First National Bank and subse-

quently acquired business expertise that ultimately qualified him to hold all of the Congregation's important offices during its first fifty years, serve as treasurer in many civic organizations, and as Urbana's postmaster in the 1930s and 1940s. He was elected president of the Illinois Postmasters Association in 1948. In 1935, Charles married Helen Wollstein, several times president of Sinai's Sisterhood.

In 1897, Jacob M. Kaufman, a native of Windfall, Indiana, brought his young bride, Hattie, from Clinton, Illinois, to Champaign, where he and an uncle from Peoria had started a clothing store in 1879 on Main Street. Jacob earned the confidence of Champaign-Urbana's older Jewish families in a relatively short time and was elected in 1904 as

Sinai's first president. His wife's early reputation among the local Jewish ladies was no less notable, for her strong Jewish identification could not have arisen from either her formal education or her farm childhood in overwhelmingly Christian Clinton. Her mother, Hannah, was a native of Cincinnati, and her father, Louis Freudenstein, sailed with his brother Joseph from Germany in 1849 before settling in Clinton, where Hattie was born. In fact, until recently, one could observe buildings and farms bearing the Freudenstein name in DeWitt County; there were also three windows in the old Sinai Temple individually commemorating Hannah, Louis, and Joseph Freudenstein. After graduating from high school in Clinton, Hattie graduated from "The Mound" (a Catholic convent) at Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, which later became Rosary College. As a result, Hattie became interested in

Catholic affairs and subsequently chaired the first fund-raising drive to build Mercy Hospital in Urbana. Her friendships with Protestants like Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Hatch, who owned the old Beardsley Hotel, led

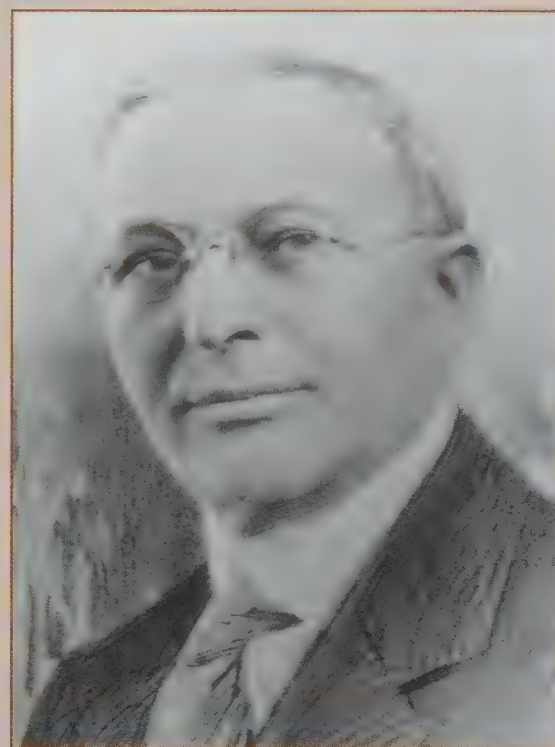
Hattie to promote interfaith activities involving Sinai Temple and local churches. However, she always gave priority to the Jewish Ladies Social Circle and Sinai's Sisterhood and Sunday School. The willingness of respectable women like Hattie, Mrs. Eisner, and Mrs. Hatch to involve themselves in religious concerns of other groups while remaining true to their own faiths was not unusual in this relatively liberal community. Jews and Christians belonged to the same country club, whose founders and early members included Jacob Kaufman, Wolf Lewis, and Albert L. Stern. In speech, grooming, dress, deportment, interests, tastes, and even style of worship, there was little distinction between the faiths.

In 1897, Wolf Lewis and his family arrived in Champaign, as had Jacob Kaufman. Wolf, an immigrant from Poland at age thirteen, was no different from German Jews in assimilating folkways of non-Jewish neighbors without abandoning his Jewish heritage. Before he discovered Champaign's need for a department store, Wolf and his family, which included the orphaned Sam Reuler, resided in Marionette, Wisconsin. Sam Reuler, whose original surname was Rubenstein, shared a bedroom for fourteen years with Wolf's son Leonard, a future leader of Sinai Congregation. Leonard received no Jewish education during his childhood in Marionette because the absence of other Jewish children there caused him to run away every time his father sent him to the rabbi to learn Hebrew. According to Leonard, his lack of interest in Jewish learning continued during his first five years in Champaign, largely because the Lewises had no family or Jewish friends in the community and encountered only modest signs of organized Jewish life there.

Furthermore, the move to Champaign entailed economic hardship for the family until Wolf established his store and reputation for honesty. Subsequently, he met other Jewish businessmen and became involved in building viable Jewish institutions. Sam Reuler married Amelia Alpinier's

sister Agatha in Kankakee and became a founder of Sinai Congregation as well as a partner in Wolf Lewis's department store. Wolf's second wife, a sister of his late wife, who grew up with her in New Orleans, joined Champaign-Urbana's Jewish Ladies Social Circle. Leonard Lewis's marriage to Bernice Lieberman, a religious Zionist from an Orthodox family in Chicago, stimulated an interest in Jewish affairs, and he eventually became a Sinai president, as well as an early supporter of the Hillel Foundation. Wolf, Leonard, and Bernice Lewis became well known for their quiet but generous philanthropy. In fact, the auditorium in the Hillel Foundation building at the University of Illinois was dedicated in memory of Wolf Lewis.

The Kaufmans, Lewises, and Reulers completed the ranks of the predominantly German Reform mercantile elite who started to organize local Jewish life in 1877 and continued to dominate it for the next eighty years. Economic rivalry six days a week between clothing merchants who constituted its core could not divide an elite whose members shared common values reinforced by ties of blood or friendship. Members like the Cohens and the Eisners, who were not related, felt closer to one another than to most of their kin. They all perceived a tremendous difference between themselves and the smaller number of East European Orthodox Jews, who began arriving in Champaign-Urbana in the 1880s. The background of the latter, raised and educated in an exclusively Jewish setting, precluded much social contact between them and the more assimilated Reform Jews. Since there were at least ten Reform families in the area, local Jewish patricians in the 1890s could count on a minyan most of the time. Nevertheless, as some members of the local B'nai B'rith lodge remarked at its fiftieth anniversary in 1927, occasionally when only nine members appeared at



Sam Weingarten, one of 15 men and women present at the earliest recorded Jewish service in Champaign-Urbana, and one of Sinai Temple's original trustees.

a monthly meeting, it became necessary to call in a passing Christian.

The earliest recorded Jewish service in Champaign-Urbana was held on Yom Kippur, 1895, and made a lasting impression on at least one of its participants, Albert Leland Stern. More than fifty years later, he recalled how he and a university coed, his future bride Amelia Alpiner, ascended a dark, narrow stairway leading to a small room above a store presently on the south-

west corner of Church and Neil Streets. When the couple entered a room dimly lighted by a single gas lamp fixed to a wall, they noticed fifteen men and women and then beheld, on a low platform, Mrs. Charles Wolf and the elderly gentlemen, Morris Lowenstern and Joseph Kuhn, who resembled Old Testament patriarchs as they conducted the service, reading alternately from a single prayer-book while standing beneath the light.

This assembly undoubtedly inspired other services, including those with music by the Cohen family, and spurred a movement for a congregation that could hold services regularly. On February 7, 1904, twenty-two men from eighteen local Jewish families met in the Grand Army of the Republic Hall with Rabbi George Zeppin, an official of the Union of

American Hebrew Congregations, to charter Sinai as the first Jewish congregation in Champaign-Urbana: Phil Alsfelder, J. Bredman, Nathan H. Cohen, Albert Eisner, Sr., H. R. Glick, Ed Jacobs, J. M. Kaufman, Isaac Kuhn, Joseph Kuhn, Harry M. Levinsohn, Wolf Lewis, Abraham Loeb, Charles E. Loeb, M. Lowenstern, Sr. (Alsfelder's and Levinsohn's father-in-law), M. Lowenstern, Jr., L. Meis, Samuel Reuler (Wolf Lewis's nephew), Abe Selicovitz, Abe Shulman, A. L. Stern, W. Stern, and Sam Weingarten (son-in-law of one of the first Reform rabbis in the United States, Bernard Felsenthal of Chicago). Many of their families had resided in the community for at least twenty years, and these founders or their children mostly remained there and witnessed the congregation's fiftieth anniversary in 1954. The founders elected Jacob Kaufman as Sinai's first president and H. R. Glick first secretary. Four of the original trustees included prominent clothing merchants: Isaac Kuhn, J. M. Kaufman, and Sam Weingarten of Champaign, and Monroe Lowenstern from Urbana. During the next fourteen years these weekday business rivals worked together during congregational meetings to plan and complete Sinai's first temple. However, not until 1951 did the congregation completely fulfill the purposes confidently enunciated by Rabbi Zeppin at its founding:

- 1) To hold services as often as convenient, conducted by a regularly ordained rabbi
- 2) To establish a Sabbath School for children
- 3) To promote religion among local Jewish families

During its early years, the struggling congregation was fortunate that the separate men's and women's organizations undertook their other functions years before its birth. Their activities expressed and reinforced a Jewish solidarity in the local community through social events and fund-raising for charities, assistance to the needy, improving hospital facilities, and maintaining a

Jewish cemetery. The first sign of organized Jewish activity in the community was, as usual in Jewish and other ethnic communities, founding a cemetery. It existed north of Urbana, opposite the site of the Outlook Sanatorium on Route 45. According to one local history, Morris Lowenstern buried his father, Philip, there in 1871. Today, one finds no graves in that vicinity because the cemetery was later moved to Mt. Hope Cemetery.



Mt. Hope Cemetery in Urbana. Photo courtesy of Allen Avner.

The earliest recorded local Jewish organization was the B'nai B'rith Grand Prairie Lodge No. 281 (April 30, 1877). By 1904, its activities were paralleled by the Jewish Ladies Social Circle, the parent of Sinai Temple's Sisterhood. It originated on March 6, 1889, when five women organized the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society and elected Mrs. Barbara Stern as president and Mrs. Emma C. Baer as treasurer pro-tem. The zenith of its existence before 1894 was a spectacular Purim ball that raised \$120 for Cleveland's Hebrew Orphan Asylum and other causes. Extensive charity outside the community suggests that the area's Jewish population before 1891 was too small to monopolize the attention and resources of the Jewish Ladies Social Circle, as was the case after 1894.

The next entry in the Treasurer's book after May 19, 1891, was dated October 11, 1894, and recorded that dues were collected at the first meeting of an organization known as the Jewish Ladies Social Circle. In other words, the Social Circle inherited from the Benevolent Society only its Treasurer's Book and six valuable members: Mrs. Addie Cohen, Mrs. Emma C. Baer, Miss Belle Lowenstern, Mrs. Morris Lowenstern, Sr.,

Mrs. Monroe Lowenstern, and Mrs. Babette Stern. In shaping the Social Circle, these women and their associates were undoubtedly mindful of flaws in the parent organization. Although it met monthly and held fundraising socials, the Social Circle bore no other resemblance to the Benevolent Society. It required from members equal and steady participation, regular attendance at meetings, and payment of dues, originally \$0.10 per month and later \$2.40 every three months. A constitution expressly delegated specific powers to regularly elected officers and stipulated a formal procedure for admitting active members that was designed to make them take their obligations seriously. It expected formal resignations from inactive members, to whom it usually offered honorary memberships. Among the requirements of the constitution was that members take monthly turns offering their homes as meeting places and providing refreshments. Article XI of the constitution stipulated that "the refreshments shall be limited to four articles and a fine of \$1.00 imposed upon any members overreaching the limit." However, lavish luncheons seemed to be the rule, as a surviving member, Faye Sholem, fondly recalled, despite occasional protests at the meetings against such "extravagance." The number of members in attendance usually ranged from twelve to fifteen. Meetings were usually held on Friday afternoons; however, for a few years following the founding of Sinai Congregation, the interval between meetings was shortened from four to three weeks. The Social Circle's businesslike manner, preoccupation with immediate local needs, and sociability enabled it to appeal to the moderate idealism of high-society ladies, who believed that charity began at home.

The Social Circle started with a membership three times as large as the number of women who formed the Benevolent Society in May 1889. This reflected the continuing growth of the Jewish community. In October 1894, the Social Circle's charter members included Mrs. S.

Blumenthal, Mrs. I. Blumenthal, Mrs. B. Baer, Miss Carrie Bing, Mrs. Jonas Bing, Mrs. L. L. Bing, Mrs. Solomon Bernstein, Miss Theresa Bernstein, Mrs. Nathan Cohen, Mrs. E. Fisher, Mrs. Joseph Kuhn, Miss Sarah Kuhn, Miss Belle Lowenstern, Mrs. Monroe Lowenstern, Mrs. Morris Lowenstern, Mrs. B. Shiller, and Mrs. Abe Stern. Before the founding of the Congregation, the preeminent members were Mrs. Nathan Cohen, Miss Belle Lowenstern, Mrs. Florence Weingarten (daughter of Rabbi Bernard Felsenthal), Mrs. Rose Schiller, Mrs. Albert Eisner, Mrs. Babette Stern, the second Mrs. Wolf Lewis, Mrs. Hattie Kaufman, and Mrs. J. W. Burt.

During its first decade, the Social Circle adhered to its goal of "promoting sociability and harmony" mainly through social events, planning some of them with the men from the local B'nai B'rith. The Ladies held their first "sociable" in January 1896. For their "annual sociable" the following year, the organization held a ball in the Imperial Hall. In 1898, the Ladies let B'nai B'rith plan the annual "sociable" but agreed to furnish refreshments. Largely because of their preoccupation with cemetery improvement, the Ladies did not plan another ball until 1902, when



they helped the local B'nai B'rith celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary with a banquet and dance on April 30.

Before the founding of Sinai Congregation, the money netted by fund-raisers went mainly to the upkeep of the cemetery and a special room in Burnham Hospital. On October 28, 1898, the Ladies offered the B'nai B'rith lodge financial assistance "in putting the Jewish cemetery ground in respectable condition." On November 11, the Ladies agreed with a committee from B'nai B'rith on the need to buy new cemetery grounds and decided to let the men pursue the matter. On April 6, 1900, the Ladies, following Mrs. Burt's suggestion, obtained the lodge's permission to finance improvements in the cemetery. They committed to building a driveway, which cost \$46.70 (\$28.25 for excavation and sodding, \$15.75 for cinders and hauling, and \$2.70 for labor). On April 4, 1901, the Social Circle began hiring a man to take care of the cemetery during the summer. The first members of the standing committee for the cemetery were Mrs. Burt and Mrs. Wolf Lewis, and its membership rotated annually. This growing responsibility for the cemetery explains why the Ladies decided, on October 25, 1901, to double the dues of all active members whenever they were absent without providing the hostess with a satisfactory excuse in advance.

While the Social Circle completed the installation of flower vases in the cemetery, its president, Florence Weingarten, convened a special meeting on May 9, 1903, to approve Mrs. Eisner's motion to take charge of the Masonic Room at Burnham Hospital. The following resolution was adopted:

Resolved—That we, the officers and members of the L.S.C. do hereby agree to paint the walls and varnish the woodwork, to put in order, and furnish all necessary supplies such as bedding, towels, curtains, stand and dresser covers, and rugs for the room now known as Masons' Room in the Julia F Burnham Hospital, and in the future to replenish these supplies as needed as long as we are in a position to do so on

condition that the room be hereafter designated as the Jewish Ladies Social Circle's Room.

The next month, Burnham's Lady Board of Managers consented in a letter written by the hospital's secretary, Mrs. B. F. Harris. In response, the Social Circle honored its obligation. By June 2, it placed the room in the hands of a painter, who had agreed for \$15.50 to enamel the bed, paint and enamel the walls, bronze the radiator, and varnish the woodwork, floor, and furniture. Every member donated supplies, and Mrs. Burt also assumed responsibility for the blinds and asked the Ladies to meet with her on June 17 to make linens. On November 20, the Ladies approved Hattie Kaufman's motion to create a permanent committee to look after the room, and selected herself and Mrs. Wolf Lewis as members. On February 5, 1904, two days before the founding of Sinai Congregation, the club's vice-president, Hattie Kaufman, reported that work on the room was completed with a door bearing the carefully embossed name of the Jewish Ladies Social Circle.

The Ladies' preoccupation before 1905 with social events, the cemetery, and the hospital allowed them to pay only partial attention to charity in the community, even less to Jewish culture and education, and none to the needs of Jewish communities and organizations outside Champaign-Urbana. The Ladies also did not let Jewish affairs in the outside world distract them from local purposes.

In short, by 1904, the Jewish Ladies Social Circle stuck to narrow priorities. Nevertheless, it contributed immensely in the next fourteen years to the building of Sinai's first temple and Sunday school, although at the expense of ties to national Jewish organizations and large centers of Jewish civilization. However, Sinai's founders ultimately did not let their single-minded effort for a temple defeat the underlying goal of preserving Jewish solidarity in the Congregation.



Sanctuary of the first Sinai Temple. Photo by Illini Studio.

II. Sacrifices for a Temple, 1904-1918

The period between the founding of the Congregation in 1904 and completion of its temple in 1918 was influenced by changes in the character of the Jewish population and the values of the old Jewish elite (represented by the Cohens, the Social Circle, and Isaac Kuhn), who continued to advance the welfare of everyone in Champaign-Urbana. During these years, Sinai acquired members who constructively participated in the affairs of the small Jewish community. They and older members helped Jews at the university, thus preparing the way for the Hillel Foundation at Illinois and throughout the United States. In addition, men and women of Sinai developed a choir,

acquired an organ, established a Sunday School, held religious services more regularly, and built their temple.

From 1904 to 1918, Isaac Kuhn, the Cohens, and the Social Circle became increasingly concerned about the small number of Jews at the university, who generally were afraid to be different from non-Jewish Americans and seemed to have little pride in their heritage. Isaac Kuhn was worried about the students, who left a family life centered in Jewish practices and beliefs to come to the university where they were free from parental restraints and exposed to temptations and difficult choices with no rabbi to counsel them. Other prominent members of the Congregation, especially the Lewises, Cohens, and Kaufmans, agreed with Mr. Kuhn that Jewish students were at a special disadvantage on a campus where those from other faiths had venues for socializing, worshipping, and discussing their religious convictions with one another and especially with a clergyman to provide guidance. Although Hattie and Jacob Kaufman, for example, did not agree with Mr. Kuhn that the Congregation should locate its temple on campus, they nevertheless joined other townspeople in welcoming students to the community seders and religious services held in quarters rented or donated by various churches. These families also invited students to their homes for dinner and for meetings, where they could discuss Jewish concerns.

Nat and Addie Cohen were notably hospitable. Jewish students, mostly from Chicago, came to their house on Sunday evenings to discuss the problems of Jewish life at the university, while Addie served cake and hot chocolate. One Sunday night in 1907, with her encouragement, the group decided to start a Jewish club known as the Ivrim Society, which adopted a constitution in November, to improve social activities for Jewish students and foster a broader knowledge of Jewish history and religion. The club elected Miss Beulah Berolzheimer president; she later became one of Sinai's first Sunday School teachers.

This Indenture Witnesseth, That

THE SINAI CONGREGATION OF CHAMPAIGN AND URBANA, a religious organization

of the County of Champaign and state of Illinois
for and in consideration of FORTY-FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS
in hand paid, Convey and Warrant unto V. W. Johnston, Trustee
(for the use of the legal holder of the indebtedness secured hereby) of Champaign County, Illinois,
the following described Real Estate, to-wit:

The East half (1/2) of Lots One (1) and Two (2) in Block Fourteen (14)
of Farham, Clark and White's Addition to Urbana, now a part of the City of
Champaign

situated in the County of Champaign in the State of Illinois
together with all rents, issues and profits thereof, hereby releasing all rights under and by virtue of the
Homestead Exemption Laws of the State of Illinois, to secure the payment of
FORTY-FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS
as evidenced by one promissory note, bearing even date herewith payable to the order of
M. M. Folks executed by SINAI CONGREGATION OF
CHAMPAIGN AND URBANA
to-wit:

One note for FORTY-FIVE HUNDRED Dollars,
payable June 1, 1924

bearing six per cent interest per annum until maturity; interest being payable semi-annually
on the 1st day of each June and December and as
evidenced by ten coupons thereto attached. All of said notes are payable at the
Illinois Trust & Savings Bank of Champaign, Ill., and draw seven per cent interest per annum after
due, payable semi-annually. Said principal notes shall be without any preference or priority one over
another.

If default be made in the payment of any part or all of any one of said principal or interest notes
when due or upon failure to pay the taxes or any special assessment on said real estate when the same
becomes due and payable, or to insure and to keep insured against loss by fire and tornado the buildings
on said premises for their insurable value in one or more reliable Insurance Companies approved by
the trustee with loss payable to said trustee or his successor as his interest may appear, and deliver
said insurance policies to said trustee or successor, then the whole of the indebtedness secured
hereby shall at the option of the legal holder thereof become due and without notice this trust deed
may be foreclosed. At any time after the filing of a bill to foreclose this trust deed the Court may
appoint a receiver to take possession of said premises and collect the rents, issues and profits thereof,
and apply the same on the indebtedness, and the grantors, their grantees or assigns agree to surren-
der immediate and peaceful possession of said premises to any such receiver. And in case of payment
after filing a bill to foreclose and prior to the entry of the decree of sale, a reasonable amount shall
be allowed as solicitors' fees which with any sum paid for abstracts of title, court costs and expenses of
such proceeding shall be so much additional indebtedness hereby secured: and in case of foreclosure of
this trust deed being commenced or suit brought at law upon any or all of said principal and interest
notes, the court shall tax up with the costs, One Hundred Dollars, and a sum equal to 5% of the prin-
cipal sum as an Attorney's fee, all money advanced for insurance and taxes or for removing any
cloud, encumbrance or other lien on said premises, and cost of abstracts of title, documentary evidence
and stenographers' charges with 7% interest per annum, and the same shall be included in the decree of
sale. If the trustee or his successor or any holder of said notes be made a party to any other suit or pro-
ceeding relative to the premises herein or if this trust deed be placed with an Attorney for collection and
the grantors shall fail to refund all costs, expenses and Attorneys' fees so incurred then and in the event
of this trust deed being foreclosed the said costs, expenses and Attorney's fees may be included in the
decree of sale, the same shall be an additional lien on said premises secured by this trust deed.

All the benefits and obligations of this indenture shall extend to and be binding upon the heirs,
executors, administrators, successors and assigns of the grantors herein.

In case of the refusal or inability of said trustee to act, from death or removal from Illinois, or any
other cause, then D. C. Dobbins or the acting sheriff of said county in which the above described real
estate is situated is hereby appointed his successor in trust, and shall thereafter perform all acts nec-
essary in the execution of these trusts.

Dated this 1st day of June, 1919. SINAI CONGREGATION OF CHAMPAIGN AND URBANA (Seal)

Signed sealed and delivered
in the presence of

BY A. H. Olson (Seal)

Chas. A. Wolff (Seal)

L. F. H. L. (Seal)

Its Board of Directors.

Before the Ivrim Society merged in 1912 with a national organiza-
tion known as the Intercollegiate Menorah Society, its biweekly meet-
ings (held in an old, rickety university building) were attended faithfully
by Isaac Kuhn, its advisor and honorary chairman; Professors Jacob
Zeitlin and Chauncey Baldwin of the English department; and Simon
Litman of the Economics department. Professor Zeitlin taught at the uni-
versity from 1910 to 1937 and proclaimed his Jewishness at a time
when Jews rarely taught in the humanities or social sciences at
American colleges and universities. Professor Baldwin, a devout Congre-
gationalist who admired Judaism, especially its moral, prophetic tradi-
tion, was alarmed by the ignorance of most Jewish college students
about the Bible and their religion. Alarmed by their indifference, he
wrote a book about Hebrew civilization largely as a reminder to them
not to forsake a heritage that contributed to the welfare of both
Christians and Jews.

Professor Litman was the foremost faculty member in the affairs of
the Ivrim and Menorah societies, precursors of the Hillel Foundation.
From the time of his arrival in 1908, when Mr. Kuhn had welcomed him
to the Congregation, Simon Litman and his wife, Rachel, a knowledge-
able and long-time activist in many Jewish and liberal causes, gave time,
hospitality, ideas, and knowledge of international affairs to many recep-
tive students. Professor Litman lectured frequently for Ivrim and
Menorah on such contemporary topics as the causes of World War I,
conditions in Russia, and the plight of Jews in war-torn Europe.

With the assistance of Mr. Kuhn, the Litmans, and Professors Baldwin
and Zeitlin, the Ivrim Society survived until its merger with the Menorah
Society, even though it lacked adequate funds and had no more than
thirty members. In 1912, the subsequent merger with Menorah attracted

This document (left) is a mortgage taken in 1919 to pay off the balance of the Temple's con-
struction loan. Photo from Sinai Temple Archives.

at least forty-five more students who became interested not only in socializing, but also in studying Jewish problems and culture. In that year, the District Grand Lodge No. 6 of B'nai B'rith appropriated \$500 for the purchase of books of Jewish interest to be placed in the university's library. These books, as well as others acquired from the B'nai B'rith lodge, made it possible for students to write papers on Jewish topics. The Lodge encouraged them to do so by offering a prize of \$50 each year for the best papers. The judges were three professors, Christians as well as Jews. In 1915, under the auspices of the Menorah Society, Rachel Litman pioneered religious courses offered years later at Hillels throughout the country by inviting ten or fifteen students to her home to study post-Biblical Jewish history and its relevance to contemporary problems. Although the Ivrim and Menorah societies did not have the impact throughout Champaign-Urbana that Hillel had from 1923 to 1947, townspeople and faculty who assisted Hillel's predecessors deserve credit for inspiring students to join a Jewish community. Some pursued careers in Jewish education and philanthro-

py, such as Anita Libman Lebeson, who became a researcher and writer in American Jewish history.

During the same period, the Jewish Ladies Social Circle undertook activities that foreshadowed the social functions of Hillel. On November 6, 1908, the Ladies planned a reception for Jewish university students and faculty at the Grand Army of the Republic Hall. Notices were placed on university bulletin boards and in the *Daily Illini* (the student newspaper), and the Ladies contributed \$13.15 from their General Fund of \$76.08, which included \$3.00 for a pianist. On October 16, 1914, the Jewish townspeople held a more elaborate reception for Jewish students. This event drew a large attendance, including out-of-town guests, and cost the Ladies \$45.14 from their General Fund of \$68.34. Fortunately for the Ladies' treasury, several students showed their appreciation by collecting \$27.00 to help defray the costs.

The Jewish Ladies Social Circle was important in the Congregation's history because of its cooperation with the Cohens in developing the choir, its leadership in creating the Sunday School and acquiring an



organ for Sinai's first temple. From the birth of the Congregation in 1904, and indeed earlier, the Ladies appreciated how a choir (which originally included only Nathan, Addie, and Julius Cohen and Cora Berman) enriched Jewish services. Consequently, in 1907, the Ladies purchased a \$100 savings bond to create a fund for the choir in addition to their other special fund for the Jewish cemetery at Mt. Hope. In 1914, Julius Cohen became the choir director and served in that capacity for the next fifty years. In future years its musicality was enhanced by Sol Cohen's violin and the participation of generations of university students, whose voices Julius privately trained.

The men of the congregation were so preoccupied with the upkeep of the cemetery and plans for Sinai's first

temple that the Ladies Social Circle assumed responsibility for the operation of the Sunday School, established on April 2, 1905. The Ladies' secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Guy West, was its first superintendent. Jennie Lowenstern Burt (daughter of Morris and Caroline Lowenstern), frequently president or vice-president of the J.L.S.C., succeeded her, and the Ladies' minutes record that she was in charge of the "Sabbath



Left: Professor Simon and Ray Frank Litman stand on a ship's deck before departing for Palestine in 1923.

Above: The Cohens in Los Angeles, c. 1924. Standing in back are Julius, Myrtle, Nathaniel, Syd, and Sol. In front are Nat, Sydney, and Addie.

School's Children's Flower Service festival." Mrs. Burt's assistant and successor was Miss Beulah Berolzheimer, a university student who, as mentioned previously, was already teaching at the Sunday School in 1907 and had been a founder of the Ivrim Society.

Miss Berolzheimer inaugurated Sinai's tradition of community Seders on March 29, 1907. Many of the ninety-two present had never before witnessed a Seder or read from the Haggadah. Morris Lowenstern, Sr. remarked that he had not seen a Seder since leaving Germany. Mr. Lowenstern commended the new Congregation for celebrating the

Hebrews' escape from Egyptian bondage. This original service was so successful that some members proposed that the work be turned over to the "ladies" of the Congregation and organized on a regular basis. In December 1907, the Social Circle showed its appreciation of Miss Berolzheimer by buying her a special gift for Hanukkah. In January 1909, the Ladies agreed to hire her to supervise the Sunday School for \$10 per month, although they later realized that their modest treasury could not support such a stipend. Consequently, they asked Sinai's president, Isaac Kuhn, to tap the resources of the Congregation.

Thanks to the Congregation's cooperation and Miss Berolzheimer's supervision, the Sunday School had advanced considerably by 1911. Sinai's annual report showed an expenditure of \$22.54 for Sunday School books, a generous appropriation when Sinai was struggling for survival. Before her appointment as supervisor, attendance varied from five to twelve students, but by January 1911, the student body and teaching staff

were large enough for Miss Berolzheimer to assign one class of younger children to Isadore Raffin, a university student, and another class of older children to Emma Felsenthal (another daughter of Rabbi Felsenthal), Mrs. Sam Weingarten's

sister. In 1912, the following children were ready for Sinai's first confirmation exercises, held in space rented in the Baptist Church on University Avenue: Stanley Kaufman (son of Hattie and Jacob Kaufman), Ben Hamburg, and Lawrence Weingarten (son of Sam and Florence Weingarten).

Prior to 1920, the Congregation and Social Circle were primarily concerned with saving money for a building and an organ, and maintaining the Jewish cemetery at Mt. Hope and a special room in Burnham Hospital. Thus, much teaching was done by unpaid townspeople, such as the parents of the Sunday School children: Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Kuhn, Julius Cohen, and particularly Hattie Kaufman and Bernice Lewis. As noted earlier, some of these people knew a lot about Jewish religion and history, while others knew little. Hattie Kaufman was a respected teacher and superintendent for many years in spite of her limited knowledge of Judaism because she was devoted to the children; she delighted in alternating with Mrs. Lewis in leading them on the piano in singing hymns and other songs. In March 1918, barely a month after the dedication of Sinai's first temple, the Ladies thanked Mrs. Kaufman for donating a piano to the Sunday School.

The Sunday School's dependence on such generosity was inevitable at a time when Sinai women were having as much difficulty as the men in establishing the Congregation while assisting the rest of Champaign-Urbana and Jews elsewhere. Nonetheless, although the Ladies were concerned about the poor and unfortunate, the Social Circle's contributions to such charities as the Cleveland Orphan Asylum or the Chicago Orphan Home for the Jewish Friendless, as well as to needy individuals locally, did not compare to their substantial outlays for the local Jewish cemetery, their room in Burnham Hospital, and the organ. The Ladies allocated 35 percent of their treasury for planting trees and painting and filling urns at the cemetery before the purchase of a \$100 savings bond



The Ivrim Society, the first Jewish students' club, met at University Hall on the campus of the University of Illinois. Photo from the *City of Champaign Chamber of Commerce 1905*, and courtesy of Ruth Youngerman.



Red Cross workers in Washington, D.C. in 1917, the year during which the National Sisterhood requested help from its member groups, including Sinai Congregation's Sisterhood.

with \$75 from their cemetery fund in 1907. The interest was used two years later to endow the temple. The Ladies displayed financial acumen when they carried Mrs. Burt's motion on October 2, 1909, to pay dues in large installments or annually (instead of monthly) to facilitate investing or loaning their money to better advantage. That year, the Ladies also voted a large sum to repaint their room at Burnham Hospital and lay a new floor.

Similarly large expenditures for the cemetery and the hospital during the next few years made it impossible for the Ladies to have a fund for the organ until February 13, 1914, which started with \$50. On that day, they decided that at every meeting members would pay 10 cents to this fund in addition to regular dues, now 15 cents per meeting. In March, they invested the organ fund in order to draw interest. During the next four years the Ladies repeatedly demonstrated their willing-

ness to sacrifice almost everything to build the temple and furnish it with an organ. In May 1916, the Ladies unanimously approved Mrs. Amelia Stern's suggestion that they substitute simple refreshments for elaborate lunches at their meetings and donate the difference to a special fund for the temple. The resolution stated that each hostess would give a simple lunch and contribute \$5 to a temple maintenance fund.

In November 1914, the Ladies wrote for information about the benefits of joining the National Federation of Jewish Sisterhoods in response to a letter from its president, Mrs. Abram Simon, urging them to belong. The Ladies decided unanimously to affiliate and in December forwarded annual dues in semiannual installments of \$1.10 and elected Mrs. Sam Weingarten their delegate to the biennial meeting held in Chicago on January 19, 1915. Until the completion of the temple and the purchase of its organ, the Ladies fulfilled their obligation to this organization by

doing little more than paying their dues. They gave priority to the needs of the temple and curtailed support for other worthy concerns.

Consequently they took offense at the sharp letter from the national sisterhood, which criticized their seemingly indifferent participation, while asking them to contribute to a fund for Hebrew Union College scholarships. The Ladies answered with a letter of rebuttal and a reluctant donation of \$5. Preoccupation with the temple was also evident in relative aloofness from the affairs of other sisterhoods.

The Ladies, however, responded to the needs of American servicemen and Jews in Palestine and Europe during World War I. On May 11, 1917, they affirmed the National Sisterhood's request for aid to the Red Cross by appointing Mrs. Lasner and Miss Schulhafer to spend more than \$30 on supplies to fill comfort bags. When Mrs. Amelia Stern, the Red Cross's leading organizer in Champaign-Urbana, asked the Ladies to follow the churches' example by hemming sheets for the hospitals, they agreed to bring as many sheets as were demanded to hem at the next meeting place. By August, all the Ladies volunteered to sew at the Red Cross every third Thursday of each month. The Social Circle also participated with women throughout the country in campaigns to raise the moral level of their communities and to win political rights for women. They wrote letters urging the mayor of Champaign to stop prostitution and encouraged their congressman, James Hamilton Lewis, and Senators William B. McKinley and Lawrence Y. Sherman to support the women's suffrage amendment.

Wartime enthusiasm for other activities did not impede the Ladies' efforts for the temple and its organ. At the request of Mrs. Babette Stern, the Ladies held a box social at the Grand Army of the Republic Hall in March 1917 to raise money for the temple and sent invitations to the Jewish students. At this time, the Ladies dispensed with the euchre prize and flowers for the sick until "the Temple is all paid for." The box social's

unexpected financial success heightened the Ladies' expectations of reaching this goal immediately and induced them to solicit a contribution from industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. He politely replied that he could do nothing for churches during wartime.

Although this disappointment slightly cooled their enthusiasm, the organ fund grew to a point where the Ladies decided, on December 18, 1917, to ascertain the interest they would have to pay if they borrowed money for the organ and the discount they would get if they paid cash. Mr. A. J. Wuesteman, the owner of one of the largest jewelry emporiums in the county (predecessor of M. J. Reed in Champaign), informed them that no discounts were available and that the organ, which had originally cost \$2,000, was now selling for \$1,770 and the motor for \$225. The Ladies agreed to those terms and on February 14, 1918, transferred \$112 from their operating fund to the organ fund in order to pay \$1,000 on the organ. At the Congregation's meeting that month, Miss Schulhafer moved that Sinai should accept the organ. The Ladies thanked Mr. Wuesteman for selecting the instrument, and the Congregation formally resolved that members donate 10 cents per week to the organ fund instead of giving suppers. Sinai congregants completed payment in the spring of 1920 through the continuing sacrifices of the Social Circle and the generosity of Albert Stern's brother, the banker Walter Stern, who helped secure for them a loan of \$277.36.



Isaac Kuhn, shown above in 1941, was a strong advocate of free enterprise and democracy. He shared with his father an admiration of Abraham Lincoln, and in his 1946 book, *Abraham Lincoln: A Vast Future*, he stated his views on both the American Jewish community in particular and the United States in general: "Democracy meant—and means—the government of the nation in keeping with such principles by the people...The American future is in our hands. The spirit of Lincoln can be our guide. It is our obligation and privilege to shape that future in his spirit." Photo courtesy of Ruth Youngerman.

During this eventful period in Sinai's history, the arrival of East European Jews and the growth of the university evoked a debate among the Congregation's leaders concerning Sinai's purpose and financial priorities. Isaac Kuhn, president from 1908 to 1910, wished the Congregation to embrace all Jews in Champaign-Urbana. He wanted the temple located on campus where a socially experienced congregation and a capable rabbi could help Jewish students from Chicago and New York acculturate to the predominantly rural and Protestant Midwest, while cultivating their Jewishness. Consequently, he was disturbed by divisions between town and campus, especially between assimilated Reform Jews and recently settled East Europeans, who were forming a separate Orthodox congregation. Mr. Kuhn feared that Sinai would not be taken seriously and would die soon unless it acquired a full-time permanent rabbi who could conduct services regularly, offer guidance to university students, and oversee the operation of the Sunday School, thereby improving Jewish education for the young.

Isaac Kuhn's ideas met opposition in the Congregation and lacked strong support from the rest of the Jewish community. Other leaders of Sinai, such as Walter and Albert L. Stern, and especially Jacob Kaufman (president from 1904 to 1907 and 1912 to 1918), believed that the Congregation should cater to townspeople and Reform Jews, and hence the temple should be located far away from the university. Furthermore, most of the Jewish students, who numbered no more than 150 in 1916, were generally not interested in the local Jewish community and seemed all too often unwilling to identify themselves as Jewish. A similar reluctance was evinced by the few Jewish faculty members. In addition, East European Jews were unreceptive to Mr. Kuhn's ideas because they hoped to grow in number until they could sustain an independent Orthodox congregation. In the meantime, they knew they could send their children, without cost, to Sinai's Sunday School if necessary.

Moreover, the rare Jewish faculty member who did share Mr. Kuhn's dreams, especially Professors Simon Litman and Armin Koller, disagreed with him over the financial priorities of the Congregation, namely the question of whether a permanent building was more or less important than a permanent rabbi. Sinai's difficult financial situation, combined with these other factors, delayed the completion of Mr. Kuhn's program.

Formidable challenges confronted Sinai during this period. East Europeans increased with the arrival of families like the Browns, Greenmans, and Swerinskys. As Congregation B'nai Israel, they met for years in a rented house near Third and Springfield in Champaign, where they held Orthodox services without an organ or choir. Until its demise after World War II, this small Orthodox congregation benefited from the leadership of Jack Marco, but never acquired a permanent sanctuary, rabbi, or Sunday school. Lacking a religious school, it paid a university student or a visiting rabbi to tutor bar mitzvahs. This included the sons of Sinai members, who could not undergo this ritual at Sinai due to the then-prohibitive Reform principles. Since B'nai Israel could not satisfy all the needs of its members, many Jews belonged to both congregations. Armin Koller, professor of German language and literature, was an active member of B'nai Israel but also belonged to Sinai, despite his Orthodox-Conservative convictions, because that congregation maintained a Sunday School. During most of its life, B'nai Israel relied mainly on Armin Koller to conduct High Holy Day services and on Henry Blum on other occasions. By 1954, the traditional congregation had disappeared, and its name survives to the present day solely in Sinai's B'nai Israel lectureship fund, initiated from a donation of the \$2,000 remaining in the cemetery fund.

According to recent recollection of a long-time member of the extinct shul, its founders in 1912 initially did not doubt its future. Orthodox East European Jews held services in a room above the

Commercial Bank and sent their children to Hebrew classes held at the Colonel Wolfe School instead of Sinai's Sunday School. The tenacity of both Sinai and B'nai Israel prevented a merger of the congregations, but the inability of each to satisfy some of the vital needs of its members



Dr. Abram Sachar, Professor Chauncey Baldwin, and Isaac Kuhn at the formal establishment of Hillel Foundation. Kuhn experienced congregational opposition to his philosophy of creating a temple environment welcoming to community residents, university faculty, and college students alike. *Photo courtesy of Hillel Foundation.*

encouraged some cooperation between the congregations while making it less necessary to unite.

In contrast to the initial confidence of the tiny Orthodox congregation, the mood of Sinai's leaders from 1904 to 1918 often bordered on despair. The only issue on which most members consistently agreed was that the Congregation was in serious trouble. The founders agreed that the Congregation needed a full-time rabbi and a permanent building, but other obligations, not to mention finances, slowed progress in these objectives. They sensed that survival of their Congregation through its critical early years depended not only on their willingness to make sacri-

fices of time and money, but also on their ability to convince every other member to do so. Conflicts between Isaac Kuhn and other members were intense, and each participant felt that his own ideas were the most crucial to Sinai's existence. Fortunately for the Congregation, the leaders' commitment made them willing to compromise.

Although the Congregation did not hire its first full-time rabbi until 1950, its leaders early appreciated this need. At its inaugural meeting at the Grand Army of the Republic Hall in February 1904, the Champaign-Urbana Hebrew Congregation expressed a desire for an ordained rabbi to lead services. Accordingly, it invited Rabbi Emil Leipziger to conduct services for its second meeting, held at the Elks' auditorium. At the conclusion of this meeting, several members suggested that services be held with Rabbi Leipziger every two weeks, and the Congregation thereupon decided to appoint a committee to see if enough money could be subscribed. Two months later, when the Congregation discovered that it



This photo of the Simon Shoe Repair shop around 1910 gives us a feel for the times during which Sinai Temple was looking for a rabbi to officiate at regularly scheduled services "every Sunday, rain or shine." Photograph courtesy of Jack Simon.

could not retain Leipziger, an attempt was made to collaborate with Danville's congregation to hire a rabbi. When this failed, Sinai decided in April 1905 to hire Rabbi Julian Meyer from Milwaukee. Rabbi Meyer declined but advised Nat Cohen to recommend the appointment of Dr. Leon Messing, a native of Alabama who had a pulpit in Bloomington, Illinois. In July 1906, Mr. Cohen requested that the Congregation approach Dr. Messing or hire a senior from the Hebrew Union College on a biweekly basis. This suggestion did not win immediate acceptance, for on September 23, the Congregation discussed the hiring of a rabbi who would live in Champaign-Urbana and have the approval of Rabbi Leipziger and the congregation in Danville. On October 7, 1906, the Congregation accepted J. Bach's motion to have Dr. Messing from Bloomington every Sunday and on the High Holy Days.

Sinai's experience with Dr. Messing was indicative of the period, for the Congregation's difficulty with him and with finding a successor led them to rely on rabbinical students. Although he was a dynamic speaker, Dr. Messing was frequently absent from Sinai's services. During the Congregation's annual meeting on January 5, 1908, several important members expressed their disenchantment by insisting that "services should be held every Sunday unless sickness prevents the rabbi from attendance." If the "No Services Today" sign was displayed too often, the trustees feared that it would discourage prospective members and discredit the small Jewish community with their Christian neighbors. The meeting resolved to hold services "every Sunday, rain or shine" and to convey their concern to the rabbi.

At a meeting two months later, the trustees reported that Dr. Messing missed more services. Several members suggested that Sinai find a new rabbi, but the majority followed the advice of Sam Reuler:

I move that the Trustees go to Bloomington next Sunday and call on Messing and inform him of the congregation's dissatisfaction. Do we

have a contract with him or not? Let's get this matter resolved one way or another. Either we have a rabbi or we don't.

The motion was unanimously approved. Perhaps to enable Dr. Messing to meet their expectations, the trustees appointed a committee in December 1908 to procure a student rabbi to assist with Sunday School work. Nevertheless, at the next meeting, on January 31, 1909, several members expressed concern that enthusiasm for the Congregation was sagging and attributed this trouble largely to the rabbi's failure to perform services regularly. The trustees apparently doubted that they could replace Dr. Messing, for they reluctantly retained him for another year despite widespread displeasure.

In June 1910, the trustees, no longer relying on Dr. Messing, tried to convince the congregation in Danville to unite with Sinai to provide

one rabbi for joint services. This idea did not win acceptance in Danville, and Sinai, in 1911, hired its own part-time rabbi, who agreed to commute for a trial period of one year. In May 1912, the Congregation did not renew the contract. In September the Congregation invited Dr. Charles Levy of Peoria to lead a trial service and appointed him two months later. Despite Dr. Levy's initial popularity, the next three years witnessed yet another change of rabbis, for in December 1915, the Congregation dismissed Rabbi Isaac Marcuson and looked for a rabbi from one of the larger congregations nearby to fill the pulpit every other Sunday. Until the arrival of Rabbi Benjamin Frankel in 1923 the Champaign-Urbana Hebrew Congregation (later renamed Sinai Temple) religious services were conducted every other week by students from the Hebrew Union College (the Reform seminary in

Cincinnati). Each served for a year or two before ordination and then was replaced.

During its first twenty years Sinai had no permanent rabbi, and the Congregation stagnated in numbers from 1909 to 1918, making its survival seem even more doubtful. However, Sinai persisted with the help of Rabbi George Zeppin of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. On January 12, 1913, the Congregation decided to join the U.A.H.C. and appointed a committee consisting of L. Schulhafer, Isaac Kuhn, and Jacob Zeitlin to

involve the university faculty and students in its affairs. On January 4, 1914, the Congregation changed its name from the Champaign-Urbana Hebrew Congregation to Sinai Temple, and the trustees sent President Jacob M. Kaufman as their first representative to the annual meeting of the National Advisory Board of the U.A.H.C.



Some of Champaign-Urbana's oldest families were among those present in the Sinai Temple vestry room for an annual seder in the early '20s. At front right is Wolf Lewis. The small boy in front is Arthur Lewis, and his father Leonard has his arm on Arthur's chair. Among others present that night were: Moses Lieberman; his daughter, Mrs. Leonard Lewis; Albert L. Stern; Mr. and Mrs. Nat Cohen; Harry and Belle Levinsohn; Julius Cohen; Mrs. Bertha Bing Slover; Sol Cohen; Mrs. Arlene Bing Wolff; Mrs. Sarah Bing; Mrs. Etta Cohen Backus; Carolyn Levinsohn; Mildred Lasner; Albert Eisner, Sr.; his niece, Mrs. Alice Fitzwilliams; Mrs. Walter Stern; Prof. and Mrs. Simon Litman; Mrs. Abe Loeb; Charles F. Loeb; and Rabbi Benjamin Frankel. *Photo appeared in the News-Gazette.*

Changing names and affiliating with the central body of the national Reform movement did not solve the problem of acquiring a permanent building, and this congregation of about twenty-five members barely afforded a stipend for a part-time rabbi plus other costs of religious services. Nevertheless, as early as May 2, 1909, the trustees appointed a committee to consult with Rabbi Messing on how to plan a temple so that the Congregation would no longer need to hold services in space rented from



Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck & Co, was instrumental in funding the establishment of the Hillel Foundation on the U. of I. campus.
Photo courtesy of the Sears Archives.

the Grand Army of the Republic Hall, the Unitarian church in Urbana, or the Baptist church on University Avenue. Serious planning, though, really started in January 1913, when Sinai finally fulfilled most of the financial obligations it had assumed for upkeep and improvement of the Jewish cemetery at Mt. Hope. In that month, the trustees solicited advice from Rabbi Charles Levy of Peoria and Rabbi Stolz of Chicago on financing and building a temple. On October 19, 1913, twenty

heads of families voted to purchase a lot at the southwest corner of State and Clark Streets in Champaign for the temple and subscribed to a \$4,500 mortgage to purchase the land and the one-story house occupying it, which was demolished.

Four years of hard work, financial sacrifice, and sharp controversy ensued. Issues of size, cost, and especially location provoked heated discussions at many congregational meetings. At a meeting on January 4, 1914, some members from Urbana complained that it would take them half an hour to drive their horse-drawn carriages two miles to worship in downtown Champaign. The most significant objection to the Clark Street site came during the summer of 1915 from Isaac Kuhn, who favored a location on Fourth and Daniel streets in Champaign near the university, equally accessible to residents of both cities and the entire Jewish community. Mr. Kuhn's proposal resulted in a controversy lasting two years and reflected an even division of opinion within the Congregation concerning his conception of a temple equally serving Orthodox and Reform Jews, university faculty and students, and townspeople. In this struggle, Isaac Kuhn, Morris Lowenstern, and Sam Weingarten (the treasurer of the Building Committee) nearly prevailed against Jacob Kaufman (then Sinai's president) and Albert and Walter Stern, respectively chairman of the Building Committee and member of the Finance Committee.

The battle began in earnest at a meeting in December 1915, when Mr. Kuhn's friend, Professor Chauncey Baldwin (mentioned earlier), alerted the Congregation to the possibility of receiving a large donation from Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, the millionaire president of Sears, Roebuck. The Congregation appointed a committee to solicit money from Mr. Rosenwald to hire a full-time rabbi; Mr. Kuhn and Professor Simon Litman volunteered for this mission. When they met with Mr. Rosenwald in Chicago on January 3, he refused to make any commitment to the Congregation upon learning that Sinai intended to build its temple far away from the campus. Mr. Kuhn and Professor Litman returned from Chicago determined to drop negotiations with him, even though a letter had been obtained from Rabbi Gerson Levy of Chicago recommending financial assistance to Sinai to hire a full-time

rabbi. However, before Mr. Kuhn and Professor Litman departed, Mr. Rosenwald asked them to put the Congregation's request in writing so that he could study it more carefully. Consequently, on January 14, 1916, Professor Litman wrote to Mr. Rosenwald:

This is in reply to your inquiry of January 3rd, concerning the amount

both beyond our means and control. There are today close to 150 students of Jewish faith at this State University, most of whom are indifferent to either religion or ethics. In order to influence these students both for their own welfare or others it is imperative that we have as soon as possible a resident rabbi of unquestionable ability, one who could win



necessary for the maintenance of a rabbi here with the primary object of doing work amongst Jewish students attending this University. The Committee referred to in Mr. Kuhn's letter of January 6th met and herewith submits the following report:

We have collected amongst ourselves \$6,000, a part of which has been spent for a lot in Champaign. We can easily build a temple for our own use without outside assistance, and we can conduct bi-monthly services as we have been doing heretofore by having a rabbi come from one of the neighboring large congregations. But we keenly realize that we are confronted with a much more serious problem, a problem which is

the students' confidence and whom they would respect. A man of this order can not be had for less than \$3,000 a year. Should we be assured of this sum we would change our own plans relative to our congregation. We would sell our present lot and buy a site in the University district; instead of a small synagogue for ourselves we would erect a structure for \$12,000 to \$15,000. Other denominations more alive to the needs of their kin than we Jews, have been pressing the work with great earnestness, building students' churches and creating students' religious centers. The needs and demands of the Jewish students are felt not only by ourselves but by the local Christian community as well. The

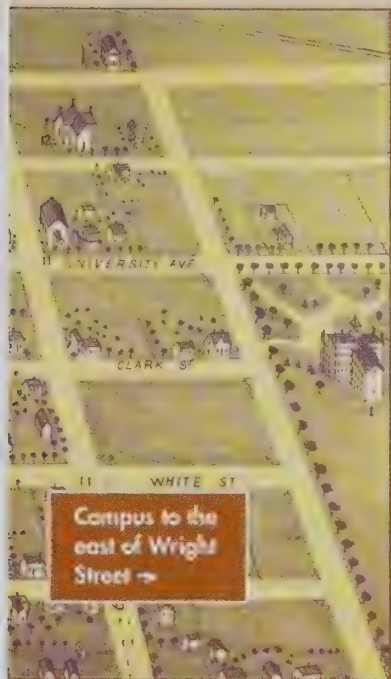
maintenance of the temple, choir, etc., would involve a yearly expenditure of about \$1,500, which added to the \$3,000 for the rabbi, will make our yearly outlay \$4,500. We do not expect to collect anything from the students because a majority of them are poor, making their way through college. We can raise among ourselves \$1,250, leaving

\$3,250 to be obtained from the outside.

Although this letter expressed ideas that later became part of the Hillel concept, this modest proposal did not explicitly invite Mr. Rosenwald to be the principal sponsor of a pilot project for a movement benefiting Jewish students throughout the country. If the appeal had been couched in those terms, it might have captured his imagination. After some consideration, Mr. Rosenwald reluctantly agreed to a mere \$500 as his sole contribution to Sinai for the next ten years. The stage was thus conveniently set for Mr. Kuhn's success (albeit short-lived) in getting congregational

agreement at its next annual meeting, on April 12, 1916, to change the site of the temple. Professor Litman remarked that it was "a mistake to ask Rosenwald for money to support a rabbi instead of a house of worship," prompting the following exchange:

Isaac Kuhn: No, we need a full-time rabbi to give our cause dignity and prestige and support from Cincinnati, and to guide us in how to get funds for a temple, and members would be inclined to be more liberal in their donations and to raise money easier if we are a full-time congregation.



Katherine and Dr. Armin Koller in April of 1940. Photo courtesy of Alice Berkson.

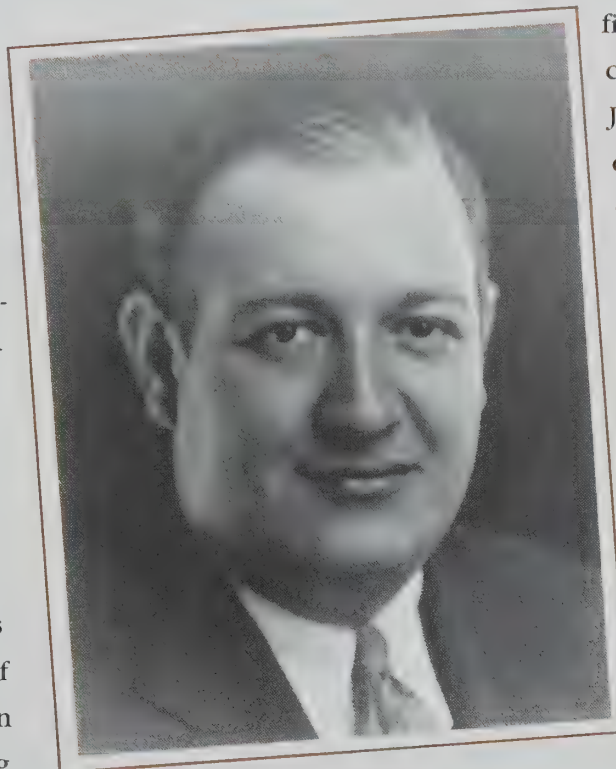
Armin Koller: I beg to differ. Now is the time to concentrate on the building project. If we have a building, we'll get more members.

Morris Lowenstern: I can't sit still here and listen to all this talk about a temple only in Champaign. It's a sad mistake of judgment if we don't build it in the university district, and it will be easier to solicit funds.

Sam Weingarten then seized the opportunity and successfully moved to authorize the trustees to sell the lot on Clark and State Streets and look for a location in the campus area.

Unfortunately for Mr. Kuhn's dreams, the opponents of a campus site viewed their defeat as momentary. This, as well as difficulty finding vacant land in the university district, might explain why the Congregation did not select a new site until November 1916, when Albert L. Stern, the building chairman, was instructed (against his will) to try to sell the lot at Clark and State Streets and buy one at Fourth and Daniel. At roughly the same time, Mr. Kuhn's opponents enjoyed a victory at a meeting of the Social Circle, where Mrs. Hattie Kaufman read a letter from her husband, Jacob, asking the Ladies to vote on the location of the temple. The Ladies voted 9 to 4 in favor of the original site in downtown Champaign. The fatal blow to Mr. Kuhn occurred two months later, in January 1917, when the Congregation voted to build the temple on the original site at Clark and State Streets, after Mr. Stern satisfied enough members that he had found no one willing to buy that lot.

Controversy over the location and the Congregation's priorities now yielded to excitement over the building's completion in the near future.



Rabbi Benjamin Frankel, Sinai Temple's first, part-time rabbi and Hillel's founding rabbi and first national director. Frankel married Florence K. Weinberg, mother of our Temple member Joan Levy.

When the necessary committees were finally activated, interest intensified in the building of the little house of worship. Like a proud father nervously awaiting the birth of a first child, Albert Stern watched vigilantly every morning from his store as his temple was being built. His first duty each day was to go to the temple to see that the contractor was on the job. The edifice was dedicated on January 31, 1918. The building and equipment cost \$17,200, excluding the organ, which was donated by the Social Circle.

The dedication ceremony opened with a prayer by Rabbi I. Mortimer Bloom of Congregation B'rith Sholom in Springfield, Illinois. Mr. A. J. Wuesteman, who selected the organ, played a prelude of his own composition on the newly acquired (and half-paid-for) instrument. Julius Cohen directed the choir as it led the congregation in the singing of "Praise the Lord." Speeches followed by Sinai's president, Jacob Kaufman, building chairman Albert Stern, and H. E. Ramey, who represented George E. Ramey, the Temple's architect. The highlight of the ceremony was a dedicatory address and a reading of the service by Rabbi Gerson B. Levi of B'nai Sholom Temple in Chicago (his grandson, Edward, became president of the University of Chicago and U.S. Attorney General under President Ford). The service concluded with Mrs. Addie Cohen's solo singing of

"The Lord is My Light," the singing of "America" by the choir and congregation, and Rabbi Bloom's benediction. For this happy occasion, Mrs. Amelia Stern wrote verses, which expressed the conviction and experience of a struggling but confident Congregation:

We dedicate ourselves anew to Thee, O God
As we do dedicate this Temple;
No lofty columns rising from the sod
But loftiness of thought we bring to Thee.

Like a gardener, who plants the seed,
Which, with his loving care, brings forth a plant
To later blossom in its full maturity
And bring to Thee the work of heart and hand,

So came to one the thought of this Thy house of worship
And with his courage, perseverance, love—
Was possible from the first that seed of thought
To rear this mature blossom which we dedicate to Thee.

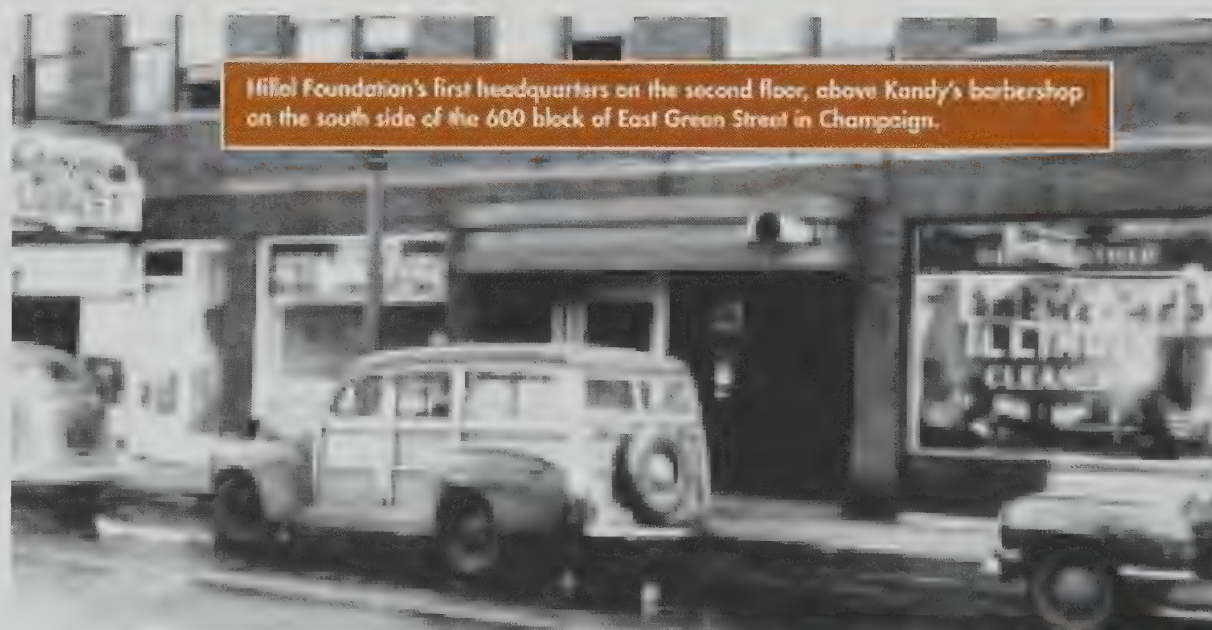
Aided by the zeal and work of others
Who humbly stand before Thee at this hour
We ask continued guidance and Thy Fatherly love
To accept from us this small but holy flower.

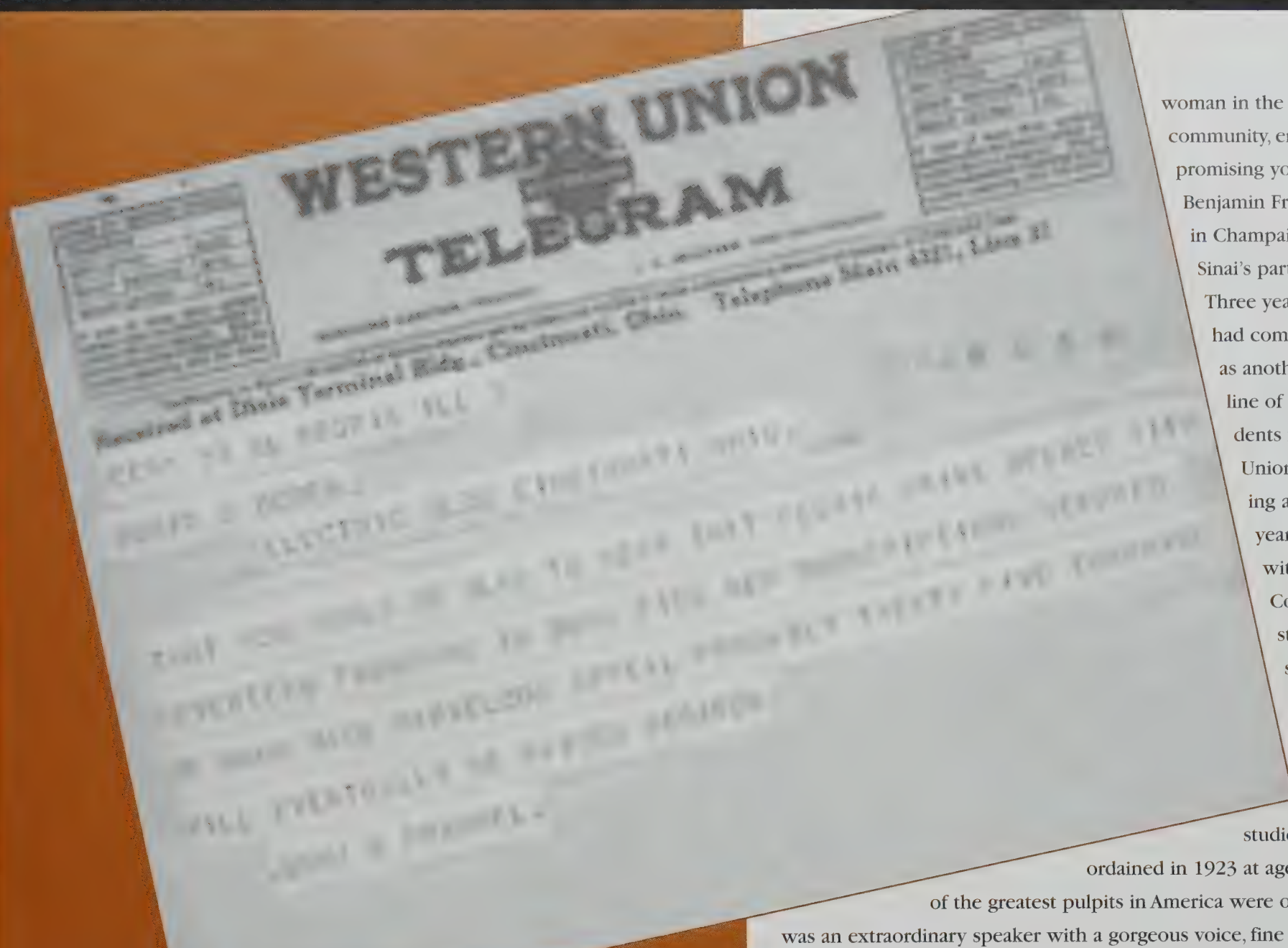
III. Sinai and Hillel, 1918-1950

The next thirty years of Sinai's history were dominated by its dynamic relationship with the Hillel Foundation, which began in Champaign-Urbana. This relationship benefited from the growth of Sinai's Sisterhood, also founded during this period, and affected the character of the Sunday School and the Congregation's role in the community at large, especially during the tumultuous era of the Great Depression, World War II, and the birth of the

State of Israel. This era also witnessed another unsuccessful attempt to revive Isaac Kuhn's dream of a temple on campus: A proposal was made that Sinai sell its building and pool its resources with Hillel and the Orthodox congregation to acquire a single building housing all three. Only part of this dream materialized, when the Orthodox congregation disbanded and its members joined Hillel or Sinai and contributed a fund to the latter. Under joint leadership of Hillel and Sinai, the Jews of Champaign-Urbana elevated the cultural life of the campus and town and helped the whole community rekindle its faith in American democratic ideals during one of the darkest moments in the nation's (and the world's) history. In doing so, they assisted survivors of Hitler's Holocaust and supported the Allied struggle against the Axis powers, as well as the Zionist vision to establish a Jewish homeland.

The B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation started inauspiciously at the University of Illinois in 1923, when Mrs. Hattie Kaufman, the preeminent





Successful fundraising was critical in the early days of Hillel. In this 1926 telegram, Rabbi Frankel passed along the good news from a Peoria event. He wrote: "THOT [sic] YOU WOULD BE GLAD TO HEAR THAT PEORIA DRIVE OPENED WITH SEVENTEEN THOUSAND IN BONA FIDE NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS SECURED. DR MANN MADE MARVELOUS APPEAL. PROBABLY TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND WILL EVENTUALLY BE RAISED. REGARDS BENJ M FRANKEL."

woman in the local Jewish community, encouraged a promising young man, Benjamin Frankel, to reside in Champaign-Urbana as Sinai's part-time rabbi. Three years earlier, he had come to Champaign as another in the long line of rabbinical students from Hebrew Union College serving a part-time, two-year internship with Sinai. The Congregation was still too small to support a permanent full-time rabbi. When he completed his

studies and was

ordained in 1923 at age 26, five or six of the greatest pulpits in America were open to him. He was an extraordinary speaker with a gorgeous voice, fine vocabulary, and a presence that enabled him to dominate any gathering. However, he was attracted by a noble idea that had emerged during conversations around Mrs. Kaufman's bridge table, which compelled him to choose the risky, less remunerative task of service to Jewish college students. He realized

that they needed rabbinical leadership not only at Illinois, but at every campus throughout the country. Rabbi Frankel agreed that Jews, like Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Catholics before them, could profit from the example of the Methodists, who pioneered the concept of the religious foundation as an agency enabling college students to express their religious loyalty, especially at tax-supported schools where church and state were clearly separated.

Due to this dream and Hattie Kaufman's encouragement, Rabbi Frankel accepted Sinai's part-time pulpit and a small stipend, which enabled him to remain in Champaign-Urbana and start the first Jewish foundation at Illinois as the prelude of a hoped-for movement. As a symbol of learning and dignity to enhance its respectability among Christians as well as Jews he named the foundation "Hillel," after a great rabbi who was a contemporary of Jesus. Rabbi Frankel boldly proceeded to organize the foundation at Illinois with no financial support at first, except the modest salary he received for his duties at Sinai. He relied on a pleasant personality and oratorical gifts to sell the Hillel idea to those who had money. In 1923, he went to Chicago and secured support from Rosenwald and Rabbi Louis Mann, who agreed to underwrite

the project and pay his salary, modest expenses, and rental of quarters above Kandy's barbershop, on the south side of the 600 block of East Green in Champaign. That summer, Rabbis Frankel and Mann, as well as Isaac Kuhn, traveled to various parts of Illinois to enlist support. During that year, a board of trustees for Hillel was formed with Rabbi Frankel as

director, along with a student council comprising various committees on campus that helped formulate its budget, program, and policy.

Rabbi Frankel failed to persuade the national Reform organization, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, to sponsor Hillel. Therefore, in 1924, he went before the national convention of B'nai



This is how the 600 block of Green Street looks today in 2005. Hillel's original location was on the block that became the main section of campustown—the block of Green Street between Wright and 6th Streets. *Photo by Susan Hamburg Huelsing Sarapin.*

B'rith, then a Jewish equivalent of the Masons, where, at age 25, he stole the show from one of the greatest orators of the time, Rabbi Stephen Wise, with a passionate appeal for his first Hillel unit at Illinois. There he promised that B'nai B'rith sponsorship could transform Hillel into a national movement for nurturing Jewish college students on campuses

where the teaching of philosophy, history, and the sciences currently eclipsed loyalty to Jewish life. With the support of Louis Mann, Isaac Kuhn, and Chauncey Baldwin, Frankel's efforts succeeded and B'nai B'rith agreed to take the Hillel Foundation at Illinois under its wing.

One year later, Rabbi Frankel persuaded the B'nai B'rith to allocate \$1 million for the expansion of Hillel throughout the country. At that time, B'nai B'rith appointed him as Hillel's first national director and decided that two chapters yearly were to be established. By the time of his untimely death two years later, Rabbi Frankel had helped establish chapters at Wisconsin, Ohio State, Michigan, Southern California, and Cornell, in addition to Illinois.

His warmth, contagious smile, and open-minded religious views gained respect for Sinai as well as for Hillel from all sectarian sectors of Champaign-Urbana. As a result of his openness, Hillel at Illinois held services for Orthodox and Conservative Jews who did not wish to attend Reform services at Sinai. Even the Jewish fraternities and sororities, the Menorah Society, and the Zionists, who all regarded Hillel originally as a rival, began to view it instead as a clearinghouse for their separate and often conflicting views and activities. Consequently, by 1928, Hillel began to overcome the indifference of Jewish college students toward their creedal heritage. Whereas only 100 of 350 Jewish students in 1923 were willing to identify as Jews during fall registration, nearly all of 650 enrolled as Jews four years later so identified themselves. Tragically, in 1929, at age 30, Rabbi Frankel died from a heart attack.

Rabbi Frankel believed in showing students and townspeople of all faiths the moral relevance of Judaism to American society at a time when advances in science and technology offered people unprecedented opportunities for satisfying individual desires while weakening their sense of responsibility to one another. Emphasis on Judaism's moral implications for society was continued by Rabbi Frankel's friend and successor, Dr.

Abram L. Sachar, and was evident in addresses delivered at Sinai's Sunday services and in the instruction at its Sunday school. Dr. Sachar's popularity outstripped even Rabbi Frankel's splendid record. From February 1928 to the summer of 1947, Dr. Sachar conducted weekly services at Sinai while directing Hillel at Illinois and eventually throughout the United States.

"Our concept of religion has changed. Religion does concern all of life, and for that reason corrupt governments and leading people can be discussed in our pulpits." —Dr. Abram L. Sachar

Although not ordained himself, he was more scholarly than many rabbis. During his tenure Sinai peaked in popularity and community interest and Dr. Sachar frequently exchanged pulpits with local ministers. He retired in 1947 to devote more time to scholarly research and lectures instead of fund-raising, but Dr. Sachar's expectations proved premature. In 1948, he began a second career for the next twenty years as principal fund-raiser, intellectual inspiration, and first president of Brandeis, the nation's first Jewish-sponsored, nondenominational university.

Dr. Sachar came to Champaign-Urbana in 1923 as a young, unmarried history instructor. Soon after arriving, he became a friend of Rabbi Frankel and roomed with him for the next two years. Dr. Sachar was an

undergraduate at Washington University in St. Louis and Harvard before receiving his doctorate from Emmanuel College at Cambridge in 1923.

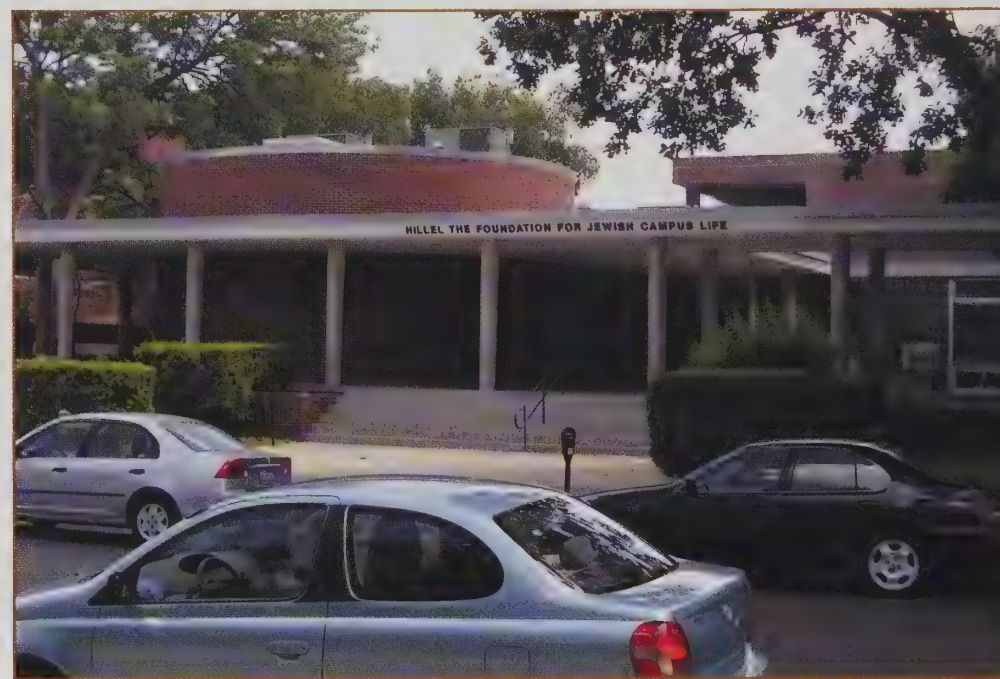
From 1923 until his resignation in 1929, he served in the History department at the University of Illinois, specializing in modern English history and publishing articles on historical and Jewish topics. He also completed *Factors in Modern Jewish History*, a major college textbook covering Jewish history from the French Revolution to World War I. In the meantime, he was faculty advisor at Hillel, especially in its Menorah department, which planned discussions of concern to Jew and non-Jew alike. One discussion in particular proved to be significant, concerning the work of the great liberal Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, followed by a debate on a topic which materialized later into Brandeis University: "Resolved, that a Jewish university should be established in America." Prior to resigning from the History department, Dr. Sachar inherited Rabbi Frankel's job of leading Sunday services and delivering sermons at Sinai.

Although Dr. Sachar was not an ordained rabbi, he obtained a license in order to perform marriages at Sinai and Hillel. While lecturing in the History department, Dr. Sachar continued his Friday night talks at B'rith Sholom Temple in Springfield and later at a temple in Bloomington, Illinois. In addition, he gave regular Saturday morning instruction to Jewish children at the State Institute for the Blind at Jacksonville, Illinois.

In 1929, the university insisted on adhering to a rule forbidding its faculty from holding another position. After much reflection, Dr. Sachar resigned from the History department because he felt obliged to realize his and Rabbi Frankel's aspiration for Hillel. Within a year of his appointment as acting director in February 1928, Dr. Sachar became permanent director of Hillel's chapter at Illinois. In 1933, he became the first full-time national director of the foundation and continued until 1947, while still running the Illinois chapter and serving Sinai Temple on a part-time, unpaid basis. He refused Sinai's offer of a stipend because he was satis-

fied with the salary he received from B'nai B'rith. During his tenure as national director, Hillel grew from 9 units to 157 throughout the United States and Canada. Dr. Sachar's genius for organizing, speaking, and fundraising was largely responsible for the tremendous expansion of the Hillel Foundation after the death of Rabbi Frankel.

Dr. Sachar left the pioneering chapter at Illinois before its own permanent building was completed in 1950. He hoped that he and Isaac Kuhn could persuade Sinai Temple to sell its first building and join with Hillel and the traditional congregation in financing a single structure. He thus worked to realize Mr. Kuhn's earlier vision of a single temple on campus serving the whole Jewish community. Both leaders almost succeeded in bringing this about; when the traditional congregation sold the building, Sinai's Board of Trustees seriously considered having these groups com-



Hillel built a permanent home on John Street on the campus of the U. of I. in 1950. Photo by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin.

The Simon Family

A Brief History

Hyman Simon, Jack Simon's uncle, was a shoemaker from Russia. He arrived in Urbana in 1903, and married in 1904, the year Sinai Temple was incorporated.



Marie Simonson, nee Simon, as a youth, and Hyman Simonson, her husband. Hy practiced law in the area.

His younger brother, Jack's father, Abraham Simon came to visit in 1908, but went to live in Alaska. He returned after a year, and the two brothers went into the tire business, then the coffee business among others.

Jack Simon's parents married in 1913. Jack's mother, Lenore Levy Simon, was born in Constantinople where her ancestors had emigrated from Spain in 1492. Through all those many generations, and having been born in Turkey, her family spoke Ladino, a dialect of fifteenth-century Spanish with an admixture of Hebrew. (continued, next page)

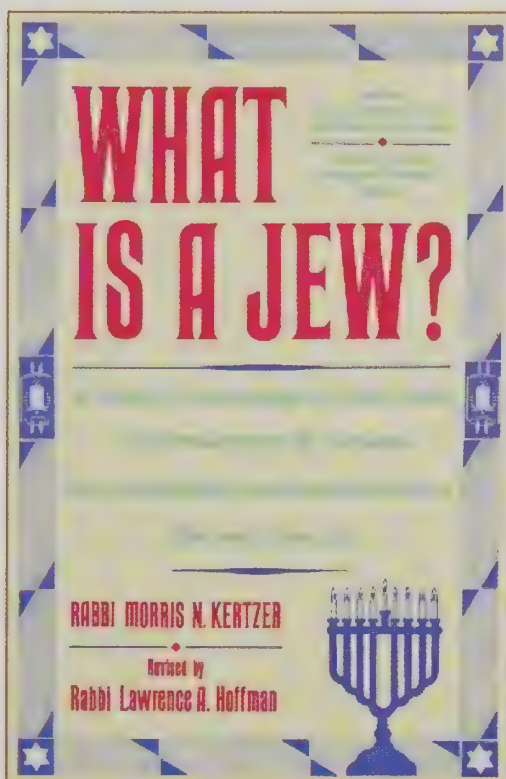
bine for services or giving each its own chapel in the same building. The idea, however, was rejected by Sinai.

Fortunately, the long delay in acquiring a permanent building for the chapter at Illinois did not frustrate Dr. Sachar's efforts to increase Hillel's respectability locally. His broad interpretation of Judaism attracted support from Jews and non-Jews throughout Champaign-Urbana. Although privately critical of the intellectual shallowness of fraternities and sororities, Dr. Sachar worked through the Jewish ones to strengthen Hillel and increase student interest in the affairs of Sinai. Hence, he persuaded Jewish fraternities and sororities to require their freshmen to attend Sunday services at Sinai Temple. This attempt to fill the sanctuary soon proved unnecessary because of Dr. Sachar's eloquence and pulpit talks on current socio-economic affairs. Many non-Jews came to hear him expound liberal views on issues of the day. Despite a weak, high-pitched voice, his magnetism filled the Temple, and the overflow sat downstairs and heard him from a loudspeaker.

Dr. Sachar's concept of Judaism's role in American life can be seen in one of his Sunday lectures from April 1928, when he explained why political and economic issues, or reviews of important books, were substituted for verses of the Bible as topics for sermons: "Our concept of religion has



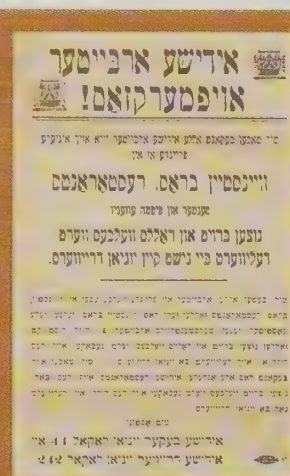
Dr. Sachar came to Champaign-Urbana in 1923 as a young, unmarried history instructor. From 1923 until his resignation in 1929, he served in the History department at the University of Illinois, specializing in modern English history and publishing articles on historical and Jewish topics. Photo was published in the Hillel Post. Courtesy of the Hillel Foundation.



What Is A Jew? is one of Rabbi Morris N. Kertzer's popular books about Judaism. Kertzer was one of many assistant rabbis at Sinai Temple in the 1930s, and simultaneously served as assistant director of Hillel.

Illinois, addressed Sinai on the indispensability of economic freedom to social progress and specifically denounced corporate infringements on the rights of workers to form unions. He said that denial of freedom to laborers in this country was similar in principle to the effects of anti-Semitism experienced by some of his middle-class listeners. During the nation's worst economic depression Dr. Sachar told an October 1930 Sunday audience that laws must change to fit new needs and modes of thought. A year later he drew upon his scholarship to suggest to the Congregation a socioeconomic explanation for religious

changed. Religion does concern all of life, and for that reason corrupt governments and leading people can be discussed in our pulpits." He also insisted that marriage and sex should be discussed, "because these are subjects which should be handled with reverence. Too often they are talked of cheaply in smoking cars." Dr. Sachar then declared that the Jew should speak out about patriotism and economic problems confronting America and the world. This liberal viewpoint was also expounded to the Congregation by guests he invited to speak on some Sundays. Edward Berman, an outspoken professor of economics at the University of

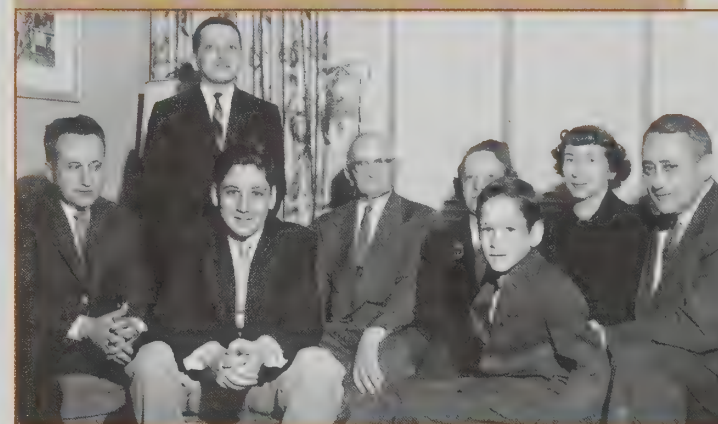


Yiddish ad in Jewish and Communist newspapers in 1930. Translation: JEWISH WORKERS TAKE NOTE! We are informing all Jewish workers and our friends that WEINSTEIN BROTHERS RESTAURANT, Convent and Fifth Avenues, is using bread and rolls delivered by non-union drivers. We ask all workers and friends who eat at Weinstein Brothers Restaurant, most of whose customers are working people in the HAV District, to see to it that Weinstein's should use bread and rolls that are baked on the Hill and are delivered by union drivers. We hereby make known that all other Jewish restaurants on the Hill use bread baked on the Hill and delivered by union drivers. JEWISH BAKERS UNION LOCAL 44 & JEWISH DRIVERS UNION LOCAL 242 on guard!

Another uncle, Albert Ben Altabe, who married Jack's mother's sister, came to Champaign because there was a shortage of skilled woodworkers. It is thought that he built the Ark and Bimah of the original Sinai Temple sanctuary.

Many other members of the family lived in the area, including Hyman Simonson who practiced law, and Charles Simon who married a Rappaport girl whose family operated the glove factory at Neil and Green.

Jack Simon (1919–2005), at right, had two brothers, Harold and Robert. Jack worked at the Illinois State Geological Survey throughout his career. He was an avid history buff, a font of information about life in Champaign-Urbana, and a highly esteemed member of the community.

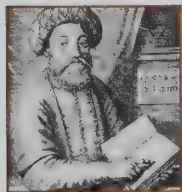


The Simon family circa 1955: from left to right, Jack, Robert, Elliot (Harold's son who now lives in Israel), Abraham, Lenore, Justin (Harold's younger son), Thelma (Harold's wife), and Harold (Jack's brother).



Professor Simon Litman and his wife, Ray Frank Litman, in 1935. Ray helped organize the Sinai Temple Sisterhood, and served as its first president. Simon and Ray were leaders in the formation of Hillel Foundation. Sinai Temple's library is dedicated to the Litmans in honor of their tireless contributions to Champaign-Urbana's Jewish community. *Photo courtesy the University of Illinois.*

phenomena of the past, such as the seventeenth-century Jewish movement headed by the false messiah, Shabbetai Zevi. Perhaps his most dar-



The false messiah, Shabbetai Zevi.

ing and imaginative performance at Sinai, before a mixed audience of Jews and Christians, was a talk entitled "If I Were a Christian," an attack on anti-Semitism and sectarian antagonisms and a plea to Christians to make peace with Jews, end age-old crucifixion libels, and subordinate salvationist gospel to social service.

The controversial topics of Dr. Sachar's talks were well received by Sinai's members because, in different ways, they defined the essence of ethical Judaism. Dr. Sachar stressed commitment to the welfare of all peoples, including the poor, powerless, and unfortunate, as well as to the privileged (but unemployed) college students and their parents. This fit in well with the activities of many members of the Congregation. Isaac Kuhn was concerned about the well-being of Jews in Europe and helping Jews in America gain acceptance from non-Jews. He provided jobs, financial assistance, and advice to struggling but ambitious college students, such as Samson Raphaelson, who wrote the play, *The Jazz Singer*. With Mr. Raphaelson's help, and later that of Fred Turner, Dean of Men, Mr. Kuhn established the Cosmopolitan Club, which provided sorely needed room and board with a homey atmosphere for foreign students. The Club continues to the present day. Moreover, in full-page advertisements, Mr. Kuhn fought utility companies for watering their stock and having no retirement plans for their employees. Although he basically believed in private enterprise, he advocated public ownership of utilities.

Similarly, Sinai Temple women continued to serve other elements of the Champaign-Urbana community: Mrs. Hattie Kaufman assisted African-American churches and organizations as well as individuals. After World War I, Mrs. Amelia Stern organized the Champaign Parent-Teacher Association Council, was a founder of Family Services in Champaign, and served on its Board of Directors, while still continuing her work for the Red Cross, whose chapters she had organized in Champaign and Piatt Counties during the war. She started the annual Mom's Day at the University of Illinois, when mothers of students are invited to visit the campus and attend special programs. Following her successful organization of "Campus Mothers' Day" in 1921, the University of Illinois Mothers' Association was formed in 1923 and Mrs. Stern was elected its president. She later served on the Board of Directors of Burnham City

Hospital for thirteen years and helped organize the Gray Ladies in Champaign County during World War II. Mrs. Bernice Lewis, who played piano at the Sunday School, expressed her sense of social commitment by acting for several years as the lone organizer of Hadassah in Champaign-Urbana, nearly two decades before Zionism became acceptable to American Jews. The local chapter, organized in 1929, was formally chartered in October 1934. By then it had fifteen dues-paying members who raised money to support the creation of a Jewish homeland and refuge in Palestine. Although most leading members of the Temple were not interested in Zionism until the 1940s, when they were des-



Dr. Moses Jung, assistant rabbi at Sinai and Hillel. Photo from 1928 courtesy of Hillel Post archives.



Professor and Mrs. Simon Litman lived in this house in Urbana. The year this photograph was taken is unknown. Photo courtesy the American Jewish Historical Society.

perate to save Jews from Hitler, the Lewis family's commitment to Israel reflected a more general benevolence toward Jews and non-Jews alike, which was encouraged by Abram Sachar.

Dr. Sachar encouraged this altruism in talks from the pulpit and in forums he organized through Hillel, which brought stimulating guest speakers to a campus that otherwise lacked an organized series of discussions on social conditions. These speakers included Eleanor Roosevelt; Lincoln Steffens, a journalist and reformer; Norman Thomas, an eloquent champion of the underprivileged; and Dorothy Thompson, an outspoken foreign correspondent.



Eleanor Roosevelt was one of many speakers at Hillel.

Another legacy from Dr. Sachar was the series of capable, part-time assistant rabbis who assisted him at Sinai as well as at Hillel. One of the earliest, Dr. Moses Jung, a religious scholar, led Orthodox-Conservative services at Hillel and assisted Rabbi Frankel and Dr. Sachar in teaching courses at Hillel. These courses became forerunners of those taught at other campus religious foundations, like the Catholic Newman Foundation. In 1928, Dr. Jung taught non-credit courses on the history of ancient and medieval Judaism, modern Judaism, and the "Social Ideals of the Bible" at Hillel. These courses were accredited by the University, thus preparing the way for the Religious Studies department.



Rabbi Morris Kertzer, another Dr. Sachar assistant who left more of an imprint on the Temple, came to Champaign-Urbana in the autumn of 1934. Before his appointment as assistant director of Hillel and assistant rabbi at Sinai, Morris Kertzer had been the youngest graduate of the University

of Toronto and the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York, a stronghold of Conservative Judaism. He had been president of the Zionist organization Avukah in Toronto, educational director of Young Israel,



Photo from the *Hillel Post*. All such photos are courtesy of Hillel Foundation.

leader of Young Judea, a Hebrew teacher, and the highest-ranking student at the seminary. In Dr. Sachar's absence, Rabbi Kertzer conducted Sunday services at Sinai. After serving Hillel and Sinai for two and one-half years, Rabbi Kertzer assumed the directorship of the Hillel at the University of Alabama and was succeeded in February 1937 by Rabbi Martin Perley.

Upon graduation from the Jewish Institute of Religion in 1934, a school of Reform Judaism, Rabbi Perley went to Australia for two years as rabbi of Beth Israel Synagogue in Melbourne, the only Reform synagogue in the

country at that time. He witnessed the Arab riots in Palestine against Jewish immigration in 1936 and then spent two months in London to assist in the work of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Rabbi Perley left Sinai and Hillel in September 1938 to head a new Hillel at Indiana University, the twelfth chapter in the country.

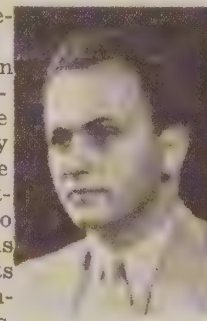
Rabbi Perley's successor, Selwyn David Ruslander, typified a young generation of rabbis who promoted liberal solutions to the problems of the 1930s. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors from the University of Cincinnati. Rabbi Ruslander's sympathy for the underprivileged was evident in previous jobs as assistant case superintendent at the Central Bureau for the Local Homeless and night supervisor at the

S. D. Ruslander Succeeds M. Perley As Director of Student Activity

By Ruth Marcus

"Three years in the ministry ruins one's ping-pong game," said Rabbi Selwyn David Ruslander as he good-naturedly allowed his game to be interrupted and led the way to his private office to be queried by your reporter.

"I was born in Pittsburg and received my degree from the University of Cincinnati," he summarized hastily, forgetting to mention that his Bachelor of Arts degree was obtained with honors. The diploma hanging in Rabbi Ruslander's office revealed this accomplishment.



Was Truck Driver

He proved himself a man of varied interests aside from the rabbinate when he told of his experiences as a life guard in Atlantic City during the summers of 1931 and 1932; of how he studied maritime conditions last summer as an ordinary seaman on the "Gulf Star". Driving a truck of food supplies to Harlan County at the time of the Mine Strike of 1932 was another of his interesting jobs.

What Rabbi Ruslander passed off as "various civic duties" prove, when investigated, to be a very active program of social service. He was assistant case superintendent at the Central Bureau for Local Homeless and then night supervisor at the Federal Transient Bureau of Cincinnati. Before coming to the Illini campus to work with Doctor Sachar at the Hillel Foundation, Rabbi Ruslander led a congregation in Port Arthur, Texas. He was ordained in 1935 at Hebrew

Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio. Some of his other "various civic duties" were his positions as vice-chairman of the Jewish National Fund of Texas; board member of both the Y. M. C. A. and the Lions Club, an officer of the Community Chest, and a leader in its campaign in Port Arthur; he also was a state director in the League for Peace and Democracy.

Attended U. of Cincinnati

The attractive young woman who has been mistaken for a new coed on campus by more than one young man happens to be Mrs. Ruslander, nee Margaret Benson. She met her husband while they were both attending the University of Cincinnati. Mrs. Ruslander became a member of the Sigma Delta Tau sorority on that campus and Rabbi Ruslander was initiated into the Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity. A year ago last Saturday a baby daughter joined their family.

When asked what his plans for the coming year at the Hillel Foundation were, Rabbi Ruslander rose from his seat and laughingly concluded the interview with, "I'm just learning."

Student Council Begins Year's Activities; New Members Announced

As we go to press the first dinner meeting of the Student Council is taking place at the Phi Sigma Sigma house. It is an exceptionally strong council since it includes all of the Jewish house heads and the campus leaders. The appointments, just released by President Bob Brooks, in-

RABBI GOLDIN



1939 photo, Hillel Post.

Federal Transient Bureau, both of Cincinnati. Ordained at Hebrew Union College in 1935, he then was a rabbi in Port Arthur, Texas, where he was also vice-chairman of the Jewish National Fund of Texas, a board member of the Y.M.C.A. and Lions Club, an officer of the Community Chest, and state director of the League for Peace and Democracy.

Rabbi Ruslander was succeeded in autumn 1939 by Rabbi Judah Goldin, a New Yorker who graduated from City College, Columbia, and the Jewish Theological

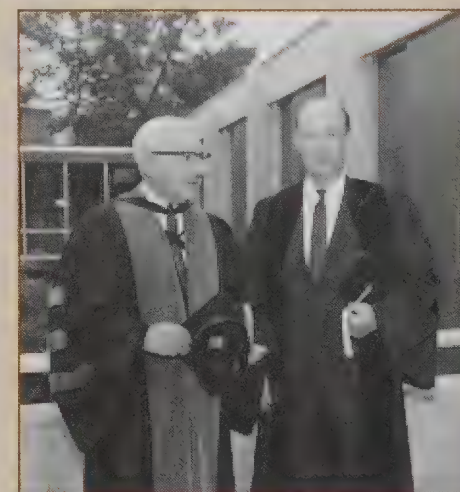
Seminary. An eloquent rabbi who impressed Sinai Temple as scholarly and literary, he later taught at Yale and the University of Pennsylvania. At Yale, he chaired its Judaica department and wrote and edited several books on Jewish themes.

Most assistant rabbis came to Hillel to launch their careers. During their first important position upon graduation from rabbinical school, these rabbis worked primarily with students, conducting services and teaching classes at the Hillel Foundation, and performed religious functions at Sinai whenever Dr. Sachar was out of town raising funds. They also did some counseling. Although Dr. Sachar served Sinai on a voluntary basis, his assistant rabbis received a small stipend from the Temple that was supplemented by Hillel. A large proportion of the Temple's finances, which were still limited, was allocated for heat and electricity and little was left to pay for a full-time rabbi until 1950, when one of the long line of assistant rabbis, Bernard Martin, became Sinai's first full-time rabbi.

During Dr. Sachar's tenure, there was some interaction between the campus and Sinai Temple, but townspeople showed more interest in Hillel than the students showed in the Congregation. The students' main

contributions to Sinai occurred when they taught in Sinai's Sunday School or sang in its choir. On the other hand, from the time of its founding in 1923, the Hillel chapter at Illinois depended greatly on the help of the townspeople. While hundreds of Jewish students descended on the campus from Chicago and other parts of Illinois and the United States, their parents and other members of the Jewish communities from which they came did little to finance the Foundation. Correspondence between Dr. Sachar and Professor Simon Litman, from 1945 to 1955,

reveals that many of Sinai's members feared that the local B'nai B'rith lodge would bear the whole financial burden for constructing and maintaining the long-awaited Hillel building, completed on Fifth and John in Champaign in 1950. Professor Litman, a leader of the building drive, expressed local concern that there would not be enough money without outside help to build a structure worthy



Dr. Sachar and Adlai Stevenson.

of the pioneering chapter of Hillel and to increase its staff to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding Jewish population on campus. From 1945 on, with more liberal hiring of Jewish faculty and an influx of World War II veterans studying with the aid of the G.I. Bill of Rights, Professor Litman insisted that one man alone could no longer act effectively as a preacher, counselor, receptionist, accountant, and teacher of university-accredited courses at Hillel. Not until the mid-1950s could Dr. Sachar assure a concerned community that money would be forthcoming from the National B'nai B'rith to cover the construction cost of the building.

The townspeople also were involved in Hillel's functions, such as

dances, receptions, and Seders. During its first year, thirty-three families provided home hospitality for 400 students. In a letter dated May 28, 1937, addressed to Sisterhood president Mrs. Charles Loeb, Dr. Sachar thanked the organization for donating a piano for Hillel's Social Center.

From its inception, Sisterhood played a leading role in the life of Sinai and the Jewish community. It was founded on March 1, 1918, when the Social Circle voted to form a Sinai "Ladies Auxiliary" and invite all Jewish women in Champaign and Urbana to join, whether or not their husbands were members of Sinai. The Ladies appointed Mrs. Charles Wolf, Mrs. Harry Levinsohn, and Mrs. Leonard

Lewis to arrange the first meeting, which was announced from the Temple's pulpit. Shortly thereafter, they decided to rename the Ladies Auxiliary "Sisterhood." That spring, the Social Circle provided money that enabled Sisterhood to furnish the Temple's kitchen with enough dishes, cups, saucers, and teaspoons for thirty-six people. By September, the Social Circle had delegated its responsibility for the Sunday School to Sisterhood; letters of application for the position of Sunday School teacher were turned over to Sisterhood's "Sunday School Committee." On March 21, 1919, the Ladies yielded to Sisterhood the function of aiding Jews in Palestine. Sisterhood also assumed financial responsibility for the flowers for services, a tradition started by Mrs. Amelia Stern in September 1919, in memory of her sixteen-year-old son, Alpiner, who died that month. Thus, Sisterhood started a tradition that continues today. After 1920, the Social Circle continued its existence as a peripher-

al club only to please its founder, Mrs. Addie Cohen. When she passed away, it disbanded.

Members of the Social Circle assumed leadership positions in Sister-



The Sisterhood hosted elegant teas during the 50s. The committee for this event included, from left, Faye Sholem, Mim Stern serving tea (founder of Pi Beta Phi sorority), Merle Hamburg, Audrey Leavitt, Helen Loeb, and an unidentified woman at far right.

hood and thus shaped it in the character of its illustrious predecessor. Therefore, Sisterhood was a strong organization prior to 1950. Like the Social Circle, Sisterhood did not exclude nonmembers of Sinai and had a strong preference for organization and regularity in its meetings, which were originally teas and, later, luncheons. In order to raise money for the Sunday School and Temple, Sisterhood relied on bazaars, rummage sales, and the like, just as had the Social Circle.

Most important, through Sisterhood, the members of the old Jewish Ladies Social Circle played the dominant role in Sinai's Sunday School, which the Congregation's part-time religious leaders, Rabbi Benjamin Frankel and Dr. Abram Sachar, were unable to fulfill.

Although the women in charge generally had little knowledge of Hebrew or Judaism, their dedication nevertheless benefited those who attended the school and remained for confirmation. In February 1920, the Social Circle tackled the problem of poor attendance by appointing a member, Mrs. Sam Weingarten, to persuade parents of "Sabbath School children" to send them regularly at 10 A.M. on Sunday. Such persistence was essential to the school's survival through the 1920s and 1930s, when its enrollment was usually no more than seventeen to twenty-five children ranging from the third through eighth grades at public school. The women sought a Reform curriculum from the Hebrew Union

College, emphasizing the Bible and Jewish history, and recruited teachers from among university students with knowledge of these subjects.

By 1927, classes began at 9:30 A.M. and concluded at 10:45 so that the children and their parents could attend Sinai's services together at 11:00. Between 9:30 and 10:45, the children received forty-five minutes or an hour of formal instruction, followed by their own little services, or "assembly," which the superintendent conducted with the aid of a little red songbook provided by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (the central body of Reform Judaism in the United States). At the "assembly," musicians such as Mrs. Hattie Kaufman or Mrs. Bernice Lewis accompanied the children on the piano as they sang their hymns in English. Fun and games were part of the curriculum, especially in celebration of such festive Jewish holidays as Hanukkah. Indeed, the Sunday School played a very important role as a social center, providing what was often the only opportunity for Jewish children in a Midwestern small-town environment to become acquainted with each other and to become aware of their religious heritage.

Sinai's school largely fulfilled that purpose and compared favorably with the Christian Sunday schools in central Illinois because of the caliber of its teachers. This was due to Sinai's occasional willingness to depart from the practices of Christian churches in the area, which considered it unusual and improper for a congregation to pay Sunday school teachers. When wages were introduced, several teachers, reflecting the attitude of their Christian neighbors, returned the money. However, Sinai wanted the best teachers it could afford, and since many available teachers were university students, the townspeople thought that individuals with no roots in the



Mrs. Charles Loeb from a
1940 photo in *Hillel Post*.

community would not be dependable unless they were paid. Consequently, even before the appointment of Rabbi Martin in 1950 and Ezra Levin's subsequent improvements as superintendent, Sinai could pride itself on having the finest Sunday school for miles around.

While administering the Sunday School, Sisterhood worked to improve relations between Champaign-Urbana's Reform and Orthodox Conservative enclaves. During the late 1930s, when Charles Loeb's wife, Helen, was its president, Sisterhood formed a youth group. The latter was under the rules and procedure of the national Reform movement, which allowed only the children of Sinai members to join. Mrs. Loeb secured permission from the National Federation of Temple Youth in New York for children of local residents, regardless of congregation affiliations, to belong. She insisted on liberalizing the rules because the small Jewish population of Champaign-Urbana made inclusion a necessity. Her success in changing the rules helped bridge the gap between the Reform majority and the Orthodox-Conservative minority. Several Orthodox-Conservative women sent their children to the youth group and became members of Sisterhood. Hence, they sent their children to the School even though their husbands were not members of the Temple. This liberal arrangement was possible because the School was still subsidized by Sisterhood. Not until the Congregation assumed its share of the financial burden were there enrollment restrictions of payment of a religious school fee and Temple membership. By the time that membership was required, though, most Orthodox-Conservative Jews who wanted their children in the School were already members of Sinai because their own congregation had disbanded.

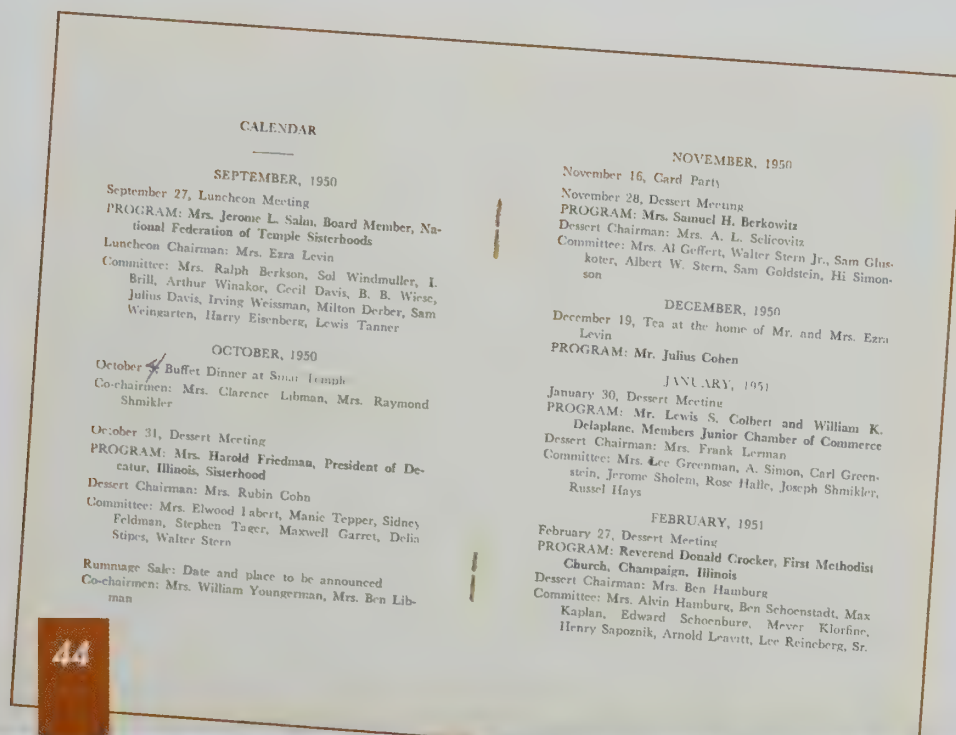
Sisterhood was also active in assisting Jews in Europe and Israel. During World War II, Sinai congregants worked with Hillel and the Jewish fraternities and sororities to bring over Jewish students who were fleeing from Hitler. Privately, and through organizations like the American

Jewish Committee, Isaac Kuhn, Leonard Lewis, Jerome Sholem, and other members of Sinai provided Jewish refugees, who were mostly young, with residences and jobs so that the federal government's harshly administered and restrictive immigration laws would not bar their entry into the United States. Families like the Rubin Cohns gave apartments and furniture to refugees; and others sought to help their relatives escape from Nazi-dominated Europe. After the war, Hillel and Sinai's Sisterhood organized such communal activities as sending clothing to relatives in Europe, particularly during the terrible winter of 1947. During Israel's war for independence, when that new country had no clothing industry, Sisterhood made it possible in 1948 for the Jewish community of Champaign-Urbana to send huge packages of clothes to a Jerusalem besieged by Arab armies. When the government of the new State of Israel sent some military personnel to Chanute Air Force Base for training during the war of 1948, Sisterhood women went to Chanute to provide care packages and Friday night services and saw to it that the Israelis were invited to Sinai's High Holy Day services, Seders, and members' homes.

A half-million Jewish survivors of Hitler's terror were interned by the Allies in Displaced Persons' (D.P.) camps; the community was so willing to assist them that it allowed Dr. Sachar to take a seven-month leave of absence to lobby in Washington, D.C., to bring over student survivors of the Holocaust. In 1945, Albert Einstein sent Dr. Sachar a letter saying that there was no hope of bringing the older survivors over because of America's restrictive immigration quota, but that something should be done to get the younger ones over on a student visa. In response, Dr. Sachar persuaded Jewish fraternities and sororities at Illinois and elsewhere to "adopt" and provide room and board for a set number of refugees while he procured the visas through the State Department— transportation would be furnished by the Joint Distribution Committee. Once that number was determined, Dr. Sachar sent a representative to tour the D.P. camps and select students to bring to America. Dr. Sachar expected to get a blanket endorsement from the State Department for the program instead of having each immigrant screened by the unsympathetic American officials. Instead, Dr. Sachar had to move his family to Washington to battle with the State Department for each of the 128 students that Hillel decided to bring to the United States. He eventually succeeded, and none returned to Europe. Of the 128, two committed suicide, but many became architects, lawyers, and doctors.

IV. Sinai's Next Twenty-five Years

When Dr. Sachar departed in 1947, many in the community realized that the postwar expansion of the local Jewish population necessitated a full-time rabbi for Sinai and a full-time director for Hillel. The increase of



At left, a page from the 1950-1951 calendar booklet of Sinai Temple Sisterhood.

SINAI TEMPLE OBSERVES 50TH ANNIVERSARY



Taking part in Sinai Temple's 50th anniversary celebration are, left to right: Rabbi Stephen Schaefer; Chaplain Bernard Martin; Rev. E. N. Wisely, president of the Champaign-Urbana Ministerial Association; and Louis Garfinkel, president of Sinai's congregation. Approximately 250 people attended this service and reception in 1954. Photo courtesy of News-Gazette.

Jewish faculty and students, as well as Jewish professionals off-campus, caused Hillel to require more time of its director. At the time, rabbinical duties at Sinai were becoming increasingly important. As a result of this influx of well-educated, urban, and largely Northeastern Jews, there were more Jewish children in the community and their parents expected Sinai's rabbi to raise the standards of the Sunday School, whose enrollment climbed from an average of twenty in the 1940s to sixty-nine in 1954.

Due to changing conditions, Dr. Sachar's successor at Illinois, Rabbi Berkowitz, became the last Hillel director to function simultaneously as Sinai's part-time rabbi. When Rabbi Berkowitz resigned, Sinai replaced him, in September 1950, with Bernard Martin, a student at the Hebrew Union College, who agreed to commute weekly between Cincinnati and

Champaign to conduct religious services and visit the Sunday School. Rabbi Martin was born in Seklence, Czechoslovakia, in 1928, immigrated with his family to the United States in 1934, and became an American citizen in 1939. He graduated in 1947 with a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors from the University of Chicago. At Hebrew Union College, he became president of the student association and won the Simon Lazarus Award for achieving the highest academic standing in his class. The Congregation, in June 1951, appointed him as its first full-time rabbi as soon as he was ordained.

During his tenure at Sinai, which lasted until the summer of 1957, Rabbi Martin was devoted to the needs of American servicemen. He worked as a chaplain at the Veterans Hospital in Danville, Illinois, and volunteered for service with the United States Army Chaplains Corps under a program sponsored by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. In 1953, he was called to active duty in the Chaplains Corps and sent to Japan. Until Rabbi Martin's return in 1955, Stephen Schaefer, a rabbinical student, took his place. Fortunately, though, the Army permitted Rabbi Martin a brief visit to Champaign in January 1954, so that he could participate in the ceremonies commemorating Sinai's fiftieth anniversary. Others present included many of the founders, early leaders, and long-time members as well as a nationally prominent Jewish spokesman and a local clergyman. On this occasion, the general community expressed its gratitude to Sinai for adhering to a universalistic and humanistic conception of Judaism. In a January 10, 1954 editorial, the *Champaign-Urbana Courier*, one of the community's two major dailies, extolled the "wisdom" of Sinai's "concept of religion that emphasizes man's unity of spirit rather than the differences that set men apart":

In many ways, the mere persistence of this congregation for a half-century is cause for congratulation. Its membership always has been small and it does not proselyte.

Yet this congregation has been strong in its faith, perceptive in its concept of religion. In the membership of Isaac Kuhn in particular, like the roots of the Hillel Foundation . . .

The roll of Sinai Temple contains honored names in Champaign-Urbana history: the Kuhns, the Lewises, the Kaufmans, the Loeb, and the Sterns, to mention only a few that have persisted. Their good works have advanced the brotherhood of man, their energies have contributed to a growing and prosperous community. May the congregation's next fifty years be as vigorous, as perceptive, and as triumphant.

The three-day celebration began at 7:30 P.M. on January 15 with a Friday night interfaith service, led by Rabbi Martin and Mr. Schafer. From the pulpit of Sinai's old Temple in downtown Champaign, Reverend E. N. Wisely of the First Methodist Church of Urbana congratulated Sinai on behalf of the Champaign-Urbana Ministerial Association. Julius Cohen embellished the service with his direction of the choir. The sermons of Rabbi Martin and Mr. Schafer addressed those Americans whose faith in liberalism and social progress was weakened after World War II by Soviet tyranny and the Cold War and its hysteria in the United States, three years of warfare in Korea, and the nuclear arms race. Rabbi Martin alluded to these dismaying facts when he noted that in 1904 people expected unending progress, but fifty years later were "disillusioned and embittered and even uncertain if they can keep from destroying each other."

Nonetheless, he exhorted his audience to follow the footsteps of Sinai's founders and long-time members, who had contributed to the welfare of humanity. "Men must have faith that progress is real even though interrupted and that a golden period of brotherly love is in the future." He concluded that people must never cease "working for happiness this side of the grave." Mr. Schafer added that people must relate "heart to heart" and think of others not as "its" to be used for their benefit but as 'thous' to be sympathized with, understood, helped, and loved."



Professor Oscar Lewis, Sinai's cantorial soloist during Rabbi Martin's tenure.

The next day, Rabbi Martin and Mr. Schafer conducted a special children's service at 10 A.M. with the assistance of Sunday School youngsters: Stuart Cohn, Ann Davis, Stephen Hamburg, Susan Levin, and Michael Tepper. Festivities climaxed with a Sunday banquet at 6:30 P.M. at the Champaign Moose Home on West White Street, attended by 182 people. Their special guest was J. Logan Fox, chairman of the executive board of the Chicago Federation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. After Rabbi Benjamin

Rudovsky, Hillel director at Illinois, delivered the invocation, Mr. Fox praised the Congregation for letting Rabbi Martin serve in the Army, a revival of spiritual yearning for Judaism, its contribution to the Hillel movement, Sisterhood's support of Camp Lac Labelle, and for having an original contributor to the founding of the Hebrew Union College—Isaac Kuhn—as a member. After Mr. Fox's address, several long-time members of Sinai recounted the past, including Simon Litman and Leonard Lewis, as well as founders Isaac Kuhn, Albert Stern, Charles Loeb, and Mrs. Hattie Kaufman, whose remarks had to be read by her son Stanley. Mrs. Arthur Lewis read two poems by Mrs. Amelia Stern, one written originally for the dedication of Sinai's first temple and another for the fiftieth anniversary. Music was provided by Max Howe and Sol and Julius Cohen.

Rabbi Martin reminded the Congregation that although Sinai had much to celebrate, it should not rest on its laurels. He insisted that temples must become "shrines of love and friendship and sympathy"

and depicted the ideal synagogue as “a just and good society in miniature . . . bound together by loyalty to a common aspiration and a common task, by justice and fairness, by mutual respect and acceptance”:

In the beloved community, which is the synagogue at its highest, there should be no distinction of persons, no greater and no smaller, no superior and inferior. . . . The synagogue should present in its life and structure an example of the moral order of society.

People must learn that the duties of synagogue membership are not exhausted by the payment of dues and perfunctory attendance at High Holyday services. Those who feel that their duty has been discharged when they have done this, cannot be numbered among the builders of a strong synagogue and Jewish community.

The Congregation tried to fulfill his ideal in the twenty-five years since Rabbi Martin's arrival. During this period, Sinai grew tremendously while overcoming natural disaster and avoiding division and despair. Despite differences between its Reform and Orthodox-Conservative wings, the Congregation's love of Judaism and the Jewish people enabled it to offer more than before to Orthodox and Conservative Jews, while preserving its Reform character. Such unity made it possible for Sinai to build a new Temple so soon after the terrible fire, which destroyed the sanctuary of the old building in 1971.



Henry Cohen of Galveston, Texas, rabbi at Temple B'nai Israel and grandfather of Sinai's Rabbi Cohen. See biography in sidebar at right.

The First Rabbi Henry Cohen (1863–1952)

Grandfather of Sinai Temple's Rabbi Henry Cohen

Henry Cohen was born in London, England, attended a Jewish boarding school, and then studied at Jews' Hospital and Jews' College but did not graduate. He served as an interpreter for the British government in Capetown Colony, South Africa from 1880 to 1883, when he returned to London and graduated from college a year later at which time he was ordained a rabbi.

Cohen's first rabbinical assignment was a pulpit in Kingston, Jamaica. His next congregation was in Woodville, Mississippi just a year later. He preached, wrote poetry, and taught romance languages at a female seminary. Rabbi Cohen was fluent in 10 languages. In 1888, Henry moved to Galveston, where he became recognized as the first Reform rabbi in the state of Texas. Here, he began his six-decade-long career as religious leader of Temple B'nai Israel, serving his congregation until his retirement in 1949.

Among his many accomplishments were the establishment of Galveston's Jewish Immigrant Information Bureau; his assistance in relief distribution for Mexican immigrants; convincing Congress to provide Jewish naval chaplains; fighting the efforts of the Ku Klux Klan; and prison reform by advocating the segregation of hardened felons from first-time offenders, improving medical facilities, and providing vocational training.

He was married to the former Mollie Levy, and they had two children.

—Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin

Among Rabbi Martin's innovations was holding services all year round instead of omitting them during the summer. Under his leadership the sanctuary of the old Temple was remodeled in the early 1950s. He encouraged Sinai to broaden the Sunday School's curriculum and partition the Temple's basement into individual classrooms. From his appointment in 1950 to his resignation in 1957, Sinai membership expanded from 75 to 125 families. Finally, during that time, the Congregation acquired Professor Oscar Lewis, who achieved renown for anthropological studies of the poor, as its cantorial soloist. Rabbi Martin eventually found himself best suited to academia. He left Sinai to become associate rabbi of a larger congregation in Chicago while pursuing a PhD in philosophy at the University of Illinois. When he completed that degree in 1961, Rabbi Martin accepted a pulpit in St. Paul, Minnesota, until 1965. In 1966 he joined the faculty of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland as the Abba Hillel Silver Professor of Jewish Studies in its Religion department, which he chaired for many years. He wrote several books and articles on modern religious philosophy, Jewish liturgy, and Christian theology.

After Rabbi Martin's departure, Sinai underwent fundamental changes. At the end of his tenure there, the university faculty were still alienated from the Temple and merely sent their children to its Sunday School, but a few years later, in the early 1960s, another massive increase in the number of Jewish faculty at the university caused it to constitute a majority of the Congregation for the first time. Salaries began rising, so that the professors could afford for the first time to bear most of the Congregation's financial burdens. These developments ended the hegemony of the old mercantile elite: no longer would a few individuals fund most of Sinai's budget and thus dominate the rabbi and the Congregation. If it was now unthinkable to ask one individual for the money to build a wing, it was easier for every member to share the burden and have an equal voice in Sinai's affairs. The

passing of the old guard, as much as anything else, enabled the Congregation to accommodate Orthodox-Conservative Jews while still remaining staunchly Reform. Indeed, the old elite welcomed the diffusion of financial obligation and acquiesced to a more egalitarian environment.

The effects of these changes could be seen in the Temple's programs and especially in its religious services and Sunday School. Before the 1950s Sinai's mem-

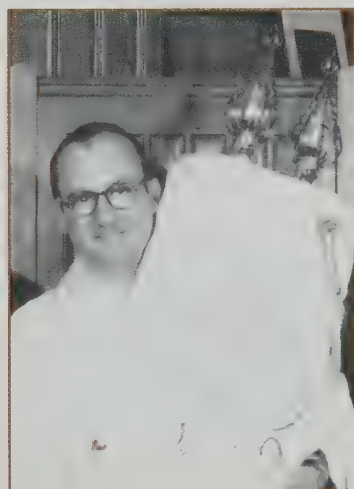
bers tried to make their children proud of their Jewishness by emphasizing the moral code which Judaism represented. After 1950, the increased influence of university people from cities with large Orthodox-Conservative and Reform populations caused a greater emphasis in the Congregation on Jewish identity. Sinai moved its Reform-style Sabbath services from Sunday, a day observed by most Christian denominations, to Friday night, when the traditional Jewish Sabbath begins. Sinai later began holding traditional Conservative services on Saturday mornings and



Henry Cohen, grandson and namesake of the first Reform rabbi in Texas, was Sinai's rabbi from 1958-1964.

revamped the curriculum of its religious school so that the children could learn Hebrew in the middle of the week. Sunday School was now devoted to the history of Zionism and Israel and some traditional forms of Jewish prayer and ritual, taught by a staff composed of Congregation members and university students, many of whom had studied in Israel. Sinai also followed the national Reform movement in encouraging the traditional ritual of Bar Mitzvah, and today virtually all of its religious school students prepare themselves for Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies as well as for confirmation.

In 1958, Henry Cohen, a grandson of the first Reform rabbi in Texas, succeeded Bernard Martin at Sinai. During his tenure, the Congregation added an educational wing to the old Temple in 1959, with additional classroom space for the Sunday School and a library. The original plan, by Herman Lewis, Sinai's president, was considered too costly and unnecessarily elaborate. Walter Stern, Jr. and Dr. Carl Greenstein consulted another



A. James Rudin became Sinai's rabbi in 1964. Since leaving in 1968, Rudin's activities and writings have made him an internationally recognized expert in inter-religious affairs.

architect and offered the Congregation a less expensive alternative, selected after much debate. Dr. Greenstein became president of the Congregation from 1961 to 1963. Rabbi Cohen left Sinai in 1964.

His successor, A. James Rudin, responded to an era of struggle for civil rights and against the Vietnam War by involving the Temple in social action in the Champaign-Urbana community. Sinai thus became involved for a few years in an unsuccessful federally aided housing project for low-income families on Bradley Avenue in Champaign, which it cosponsored with the local churches through the interdenomina-

tional Council of Congregations. This project generated dissension within Sinai, and even more within the churches, because many Jews and Christians believed that their congregations should confine themselves to their own creedal concerns. Some other opponents, however, might have supported the project, if it had been better planned. Instead, many Sinai members focused on the Temple's midweek Hebrew classes, open to adults as well as to the Sunday School children, on Sinai's choirs (professional, adult volunteer, and children's), and especially on its adult education program, which already included lectures, films, and discussions on topics of Jewish interest held after Friday night services. There was also an adult "college of Jewish studies" that met twice a month.

With Samuel Weingart's appointment in 1968 as the next rabbi, Sinai concentrated on planning a new Temple because the old one could not be expanded or renovated. The Congregation's membership and Sunday School enrollment doubled from 100 families and 69 students in 1954 to over 200 families and 140 students by the mid-1970s. In 1970, Sinai appointed Mrs. Ralph Berkson to chair a committee of ten or eleven members to select the site and plan the building. After much consultation with several realtors, Mrs. Berkson's committee recommended the Temple's present site on Windsor and Duncan



Rabbi Samuel Weingart, Sinai Temple's rabbi after James Rudin. As of 2005, Weingart was serving as Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Israel in West Lafayette, Indiana.

Roads, several miles west of downtown Champaign and further removed from campus than the old building. As an alternative, it also recommended a closer location that would cost an additional \$20,000. When informed of these possibilities, the Congregation unanimously chose the less expensive site.

On January 5, 1971, the old Temple went up in flames, leaving in serviceable condition only the new educational wing of the old building. Although the fire was accidental, Jews in Champaign-Urbana were horrified because it reminded them of the deliberate destruction of countless synagogues throughout the ages. During the fire, Rabbi Weingart followed ancient tradition and ran into the burning sanctuary to rescue the Torah scrolls. Services after the fire



CITY FIREMAN SPRAYS INTO VENTILATION DUCT
... trying to get at fire's origin in basement

A Champaign newspaper photograph of the Sinai Temple fire in 1971.



were conducted in the Sunday School rooms of the undamaged educational wing, at Hillel, or in space donated by churches. The Congregation felt bereft and homeless.

Just five days after the fire, the Congregation held its Friday night service at Hillel. At the meeting that followed, a saddened and stunned Congregation discussed whether to rebuild the Temple on its original site or whether Sinai should launch a major fund-raising drive to construct a larger sanctuary and social center on Windsor Road. The Congregation appointed a special committee, chaired by Mrs. Ezra Levin, to resolve this issue and determine the building requirements. At another special meeting, on April 1, Mrs. Levin's committee reported in favor of the latter idea. On August 8, the Congregation accepted the committee's report suggesting a building project costing almost \$500,000. Following the advice of Edward Tepper, who subsequently served as Sinai's president from 1971 to 1975, the Congregation agreed to finance the new building through pledges from members totaling \$275,000 over a five-year period: \$125,000 from the fire insurance proceeds, \$100,000



Don Brotherson guided the temple reconstruction project by co-chairing the building drive with Ed Tepper. Photo by Illini Studio.

from the sale of the old building and its land, and \$50,000 from investing all these funds during the construction period. Many non-Jews contributed to this fund. Mr. Tepper and Donald Brotherson, a local architect and professor at the University of Illinois who co-chaired the building drive with Mr. Tepper, were largely responsible for selecting the Chicago architectural firm of Walter H. Sobel to design the new building.

Thanks to the leadership of Mr. Tepper and Mr. Brotherson, who succeeded the former as Sinai's president, the Congregation completed the project while enduring construction delays, cost overruns, trouble with the architects, and arguments among the members who (as usual) held strong opinions about the construction, appearance, and financing of the new Temple. To harness the energies of the members and thus to preserve the Congregation's unity, Mr. Brotherson agreed to implement Mr. Tepper's idea of creating enough committees to involve every member in the building of the Temple. The General Building Committee, chaired by Mr. Brotherson, included Mr. Tepper as ex-officio member, as well as Arthur Robinson as secretary and Stephen Kotok as treasurer. In addition, there were the following: Mrs. Ezra Levin, chair of the Building Needs Committee; Dr. Milton R. Glaser, chair of the Architect Selection Committee; Mrs. Stephen R. Tager, chair of the Preservations and Furnishings Committee; Mr. Harold Gluskoter, chair of the Building Construction Committee; Dr. Myron H. Kulwin, chair of the Finance, Legal, and Real Estate Committee; and Jack Simon, chair of the Fund-Raising Committee. Mrs. Ralph Berkson and Mr. Simon organized many members into teams to solicit from groups outside the Congregation. Even Sinai's religious-school children were involved. On April 29, 1973, a caravan of cars under police escort transported them from their classes in the old Temple's educational wing on Clark and State Streets to join their parents for the groundbreaking ceremonies on Windsor and Duncan Roads in southwest Champaign. They took turns, after Ezra Levin and Jerome J. Sholem, in spading the earth on which their Temple would rise.

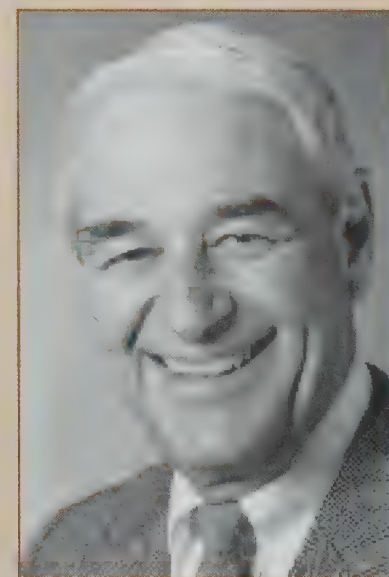


Above: Rabbi Isaac Neuman dedicated the new Temple on April 11, 1975. Rabbi Neuman became the congregation's rabbi emeritus when Rabbi Brad Bloom replaced him as rabbi.

For nearly a year, the Congregation held services in the youth lounge of the new Temple, until the completion of the sanctuary. On April 11, 1975, Rabbi Weingart's successor, Isaac Neuman, dedicated the Temple. Its sanctuary is at the center of a modern-looking cluster of three equal-sized, double-height hexagons with a sloping roof. The sanctuary seats 150, and together with the adjacent reception rooms, it accommodates up to 500 people. As a fitting memorial, several stained glass windows from the old Temple's charred sanctuary were built into the new sanctuary's walls. Scattered throughout the building is art collected by Mrs. Ruth Tager. Among these works are a sculpture memorial to the Holocaust by Charles Clements donated by Fela and Leon Bankier, and a bronze sculpture, entitled *Eternal Light*, by Ludwig Wolpert. The Temple includes a library, a gift

shop operated by Sisterhood, and a large wing for classrooms and social activities of the religious school. A garden with trees was established to commemorate Julius Cohen, who passed away in 1973, after a long life of unpaid, uninterrupted, and generous service not only to Sinai as its choir director, but also to the university and to appreciative music lovers throughout central Illinois, for whom he sang without a fee.

Rabbi Isaac Neuman is recognized locally and outside the community for his learning. He led the local association of



Fred Gottheil, U. of I. professor.

clergymen and conducted discussions and Seders in neighboring communities. A Yiddish-speaking East European immigrant who survived the Nazis' extermination camps after his participation in the Polish underground, he received his college education and Reform rabbinical training in America after the war, and served congregations in Panama and Iowa before coming to Champaign-Urbana. Since his appointment in 1974, his unusual background enabled him to preserve harmony between the Congregation's Reform and Orthodox-Conservative wings. In serving the needs of the various groups comprising Sinai Congregation, Rabbi Neuman refrained from seeking a simple common denominator in designing religious services. Instead, Rabbi Neuman understood that most members do not attend every service and that it was wise to provide some services each year for every group by varying the style of the services. He began the practice of announcing well in advance the day or evening on which he would lead a Reform, Conservative, or children's service and instituted traditional Sabbath services on Saturday mornings. In addition to gaining the respect of

Sinai's religious school children, Rabbi Neuman encouraged the growth of Sinai's Youth Group, Singles Club, and Adult Education Program, which now includes not only classes in Hebrew, but also conversational Yiddish, the philosophy of Judaism, and Israeli folk-dancing. Lectures and discussions by university professors, such as Gary Porton of the Religious Studies department and Fred Gottheil of the Economics department, are featured.

Sinai has deepened its Congregation's knowledge of the Jewish heritage and Jewish identity, and we can be sure that this Congregation and its children will apply these painstakingly acquired Jewish insights to problems facing humanity in general. "Tomorrow's Threshold," the poem Mrs. Amelia Stern wrote in 1954 for its fiftieth anniversary, expresses in fitting historical terms the living idealism of a practical Jewish congregation in America's midwestern heartland:

A group of men, honest and true
wishing their faith again to renew
met for prayer, which lifts above
the petty woes of life and brings
man nearer to God's love,
away from earthly strife.



Attending the 50th anniversary dinner of Sinai Temple at the Moose Club were some of the most active members of the congregation for the past 50 years (foreground): seated left to right, Mrs. Isaac Kuhn, Mrs. Leonard Lewis, and Mrs. J.M. Kaufman. Standing left to right, Isaac Kuhn, Mrs. Albert L. Stern (author of "Tomorrow's Threshold"), Charles F. Loeb, Leonard Lewis, Prof. Simon Litman, A.L. Stern, and Mrs. Sam Weingarten. Photo courtesy of News-Gazette.

To be humble before God, do justice, mercy show,
that was their creed for all to know,
and in two generations past
their earnest prayers firmly last,
until a glowing future blossoms from the now.

Another fifty years you face,
mindful of God's wondrous grace;
praying for religion, nearing the divine,
striving towards the Exalted and God sublime.
Let us then remember the men so true
and constantly pray our faith anew.



In the Days of the Second Temple: A History of Sinai Temple from the 1960s to the Present

by Blair B. Kling

The period from 1966 to the present falls naturally into four eras, each of which presents different problems and opportunities for the Congregation. The first of these, from about 1966 to 1974, was a crucial period in the history of Sinai Temple—a period that saw many changes in the nature of the membership with the result that the Congregation of the early 1960s was quite different from the one that emerged in the mid-1970s. It was a period that required statesmanship and dedication for the Temple to survive the threat of disintegration.

In the next period, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, the Congregation emerged from the earlier controversies and the loss of its sanctuary to begin a new life in a new and elegant home. Many of the members were inspired to contribute their time and talents to the Temple, to embellish it and use it creatively. In every way—physically,

At left: During a quiet moment at Sinai Temple, prayerbooks and *talitot* draped over the front pews await the beginning of a bat mitzvah service in the new Temple's sanctuary. Photo by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin.

liturgically, and educationally—the Congregation entered the world of the modern urban Reform congregation.

From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s was another period of struggle. The glamor and excitement of the previous decade gradually faded, and difficulties of sustaining enthusiasm and making the Temple meaningful in the lives of its members challenged the leadership. It was a period of looking inward, of searching for new purpose as the old reasons for working and contributing time and money seemed less meaningful. The expansion and changed nature of the membership, along with the accompanying depersonalization, called for new ways to bring people together and prevent the Temple from becoming an impersonal “institution.”

We are now in the fourth decade, the period roughly from 1995 to 2005, and, although it is too soon to see it in perspective, Temple life appears to reflect the contemporary yearning for community, religious expression, and a deeper understanding of Judaism itself.

In each period, the rabbi seemed to embody the essence of the era. This was certainly the case with Rabbi James Rudin, who served from 1964 to 1968. By the time he came to Champaign, the University of Illinois, like other large universities in the West and Midwest, had already recruited a substantial number of Jewish faculty and staff following the expansion of higher education that took place after World War II. In January 1968 the Board reported that it took fifty-six years to reach 100 members and only nine more to reach 200. By the end of the year, the number had jumped to 250. Fifty-five percent of the Congregation were now associated with the university.

Many of the new members were involved in or sympathetic to the anti-Vietnam war and civil rights movements. Rabbi Rudin, supported by these new congregants and some of the old members as well, wanted Temple Sinai to join with the mainline liberal Protestant churches to express its opposition to the war and to commit itself to social programs.

Opponents wanted the Temple to restrict itself to activities relating directly to the Jewish community and to its traditional activities, and in 1967 the president, Arthur Winakor, expressed hope that disagreements between the older families and the newer members would not weaken the Temple. One of the first of the new wave of academics to join the Temple was Marvin Steinberg, who served as president in 1960–1961. He and his wife Esther and a few other couples like them helped to reconcile differences by devoting their energies to bringing the two groups together.

Reaching out to youth in an attempt to close the “generation gap” was another hallmark of the late 1960s. Community pressure to reach out to youth was reinforced by pressure from the UAHC, which at its national meeting in November 1966, emphasized the importance of social action in making Judaism more relevant to the younger generation. In 1968, after the assassination of Martin Luther King, the UAHC issued a “Call to Racial Justice” with concrete suggestions for Reform congregations in support of the civil rights movement. Many of the sug-

gestions were watered down by the Temple Board, though by this time the conservatives on the board represented only a minority of the Congregation. The Board was also critical of Rudin’s participation in numerous community organizations and felt he was neglecting his rabbinical duties. Rudin obliged them by limiting his outside activities to only one—the Mental Health Association.

The influx of new members who had been raised in traditional congregations led to another issue, this one universal in the Reform congregations of the day: namely, the call for revision in the classical Reform liturgy. In 1968 Rabbi Rudin told the Board of the need to assimilate members from different backgrounds to the Reform movement, and he called on the older members to modify obsolete attitudes and terminology. Thus, the “Sunday school” was to be renamed the “Religious School” and the “vestry room” the “social hall.” He also called for more adult education on the social issues of the day, including the Vietnam War.

One divisive issue that grew out of the civil rights movement was whether the Temple should join the Christian churches to sponsor public

housing. A University of Illinois professor on the Board represented the Temple on the Committee on Interfaith Housing. In spite of the opposition by the majority of the Board, participation in the project was supported by a vote of the Congregation 132 to 104. Two years later the Board agreed to participate fully in the Interfaith Housing Corporation and the Concerned Citizens



Civil rights marches were emblematic of the 1960s. In 1968, the UAHC issued a “Call to Racial Justice” in support of the civil rights movement.



Sinai Temple's congregants, some as young as 40, can still remember when the sanctuary looked like this in the first Temple building before the devastating fire of 1971. The traditional design featured the impressive pipe organ, the result of years of fund-raising by the Jewish Ladies Social Circle, the choir loft located behind the stately Ark of the Covenant and behind the curtained low wall, the centrally positioned eternal light and lectern, steps up to the *bimah* from each side, wood floors, American flag, and two matching *menorahs* on the *bimah*. The room on the left was used to store extra seating for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services.



Committee to sponsor housing in urban renewal areas of Champaign. Very little came out of all these efforts, and in 1974, to the relief of the fiscally conscious Board, the Federal Housing Authority took over the job.

In addition to these movements, no Jewish congregation could ignore the impact of the State of Israel on Jewish life in America. The 1967 War brought Israel to the attention of the world, and many Reform Jews who had previously been cool toward Zionism were swept up along with the entire world Jewish community

in support of an Israeli nation fighting alone for its survival. At the level of our Temple, the existence and importance of Israel had many effects. The Board set up an Israel Committee, and gradually there were changes in the religious education curriculum and the incorporation of more Hebrew and traditional music at services. In 1969 the Board passed a motion making attendance at Hebrew classes for two hours at midweek and one hour on Sunday compulsory for all Religious School students. This rule was rescinded less than a year later, but the Board continued to strongly support Hebrew classes.

In June 1968 Rabbi Rudin decided to leave the Temple and accept a position as Assistant National Director of Interreligious and Interracial Affairs of the American Jewish Committee in New York City. During the months of October and November, the Temple employed student Rabbi Sally Priesand, who in 1972 became the

country's first ordained female rabbi (retired, June 2006). She was succeeded by a young rabbi, Samuel Weingart, who could not have foreseen the tremendous difficulties he would soon be facing.



HARVEST FESTIVAL. The ancient Jewish harvest festival, Sukos, was celebrated Sunday at Sinai Temple. Conducting services was Rabbi Sally Priesand, kneeling, from Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, the only female Rabbi in the United States. Miniature scrolls and flowers were carried by children to symbolize the spiritual and festive aspects of the holiday. The children with the Rabbi in a sukka, decorated with the fruits of harvest, are, from left, Zoe Olefsky, Nathan Rudin, Diane Sredl and Dan Sholem.

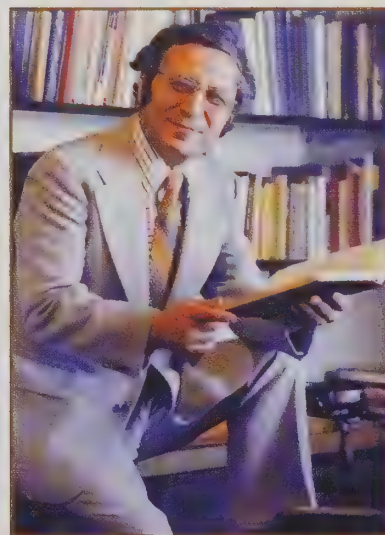
By 1968 the large growth in membership, overcrowding of classrooms, and physical deterioration of the old Temple building led the Board to establish a Building Functions Committee to plan for the future needs of the Congregation. In 1969 the committee was asked to recommend whether to expand and renovate the old building or to begin planning for a new building. It commissioned Don Brotherson, a member since 1961 and a professional architect, to prepare feasibility studies for the committee. In February 1970 the committee recommended building a new Temple on a new site, and in May the Board took the bold step of purchasing a 4-acre lot in Lincolnshire Fields on Windsor Road west of Duncan Road for \$42,000. It raised the money by mortgaging the old Temple and assessing the membership over a five-year period.

In January 1971 a fire at the old building destroyed the sanctuary, social hall, kitchen, and gift shop. For the first time since 1918 the Congregation was without a home, and building a new Temple was now an urgent matter. A special meeting of the Congregation was called at the Urbana Civic Center to consider three alternatives: (1) to rebuild the old Temple, (2) to build an expanded Temple on the old site, or (3) to build a new Temple on the lot the Congregation had acquired in Lincolnshire Fields. After a heated discussion, the Congregation voted to approve the Board's recommendation and build a new Temple on the new site. Soon after, the Board appointed a Building Committee to work on plans, select an architect, estimate the expenditures, suggest sources of funding, and report to the Board by October 5. Don Brotherson was appointed to chair the committee.

While the Building Committee was at work, the administration and school carried on their activities in the school wing of the old Temple, which needed cleaning but was otherwise unharmed by the fire. Local churches and the Hillel Foundation offered facilities for worship and classrooms. While the Board was engrossed in building and fund-raising,

Rabbi Weingart assumed the Herculean task of preserving normality, keeping the Temple operating, and holding the Congregation together. The policies of the late 1960s with regard to social action were carried on as well as they could be, but there was little energy left for innovation. The membership actually declined from 250 member families in 1968 to 198 in 1974. In June 1974 Rabbi Weingart left Sinai Temple for Temple Israel in Lafayette, Indiana, where he served as rabbi until his retirement in 1999.

Rabbi Isaac Neuman succeeded him in 1974 and had the privilege of leading the Congregation into its new home. Though the new building was not completed until mid-1975, services were held in the new youth



Rabbi Isaac Neuman succeeded Rabbi Weingart in 1974, and was the first rabbi to lead the Sinai congregation in the new temple building, formally dedicating the structure in a ceremony on April 11, 1975.

lounge on December 3, 1974, and in January 1975 the Board met in one of the new classrooms. The sanctuary, social halls, library, kitchen, and offices were usable by March, and the Temple was about 95 percent completed when the new building was formally dedicated in a ceremony on April 11, 1975. The total cost of the new Temple was approximately \$588,000, of which \$148,479 came from the fire insurance settlement, \$95,000 came from the sale of the old temple property, and \$256,580 was raised or pledged by the membership. The balance was to be met by assessments on new members joining the Temple.

On the recommendation of Don Brotherson, the Board selected the Chicago firm of Walter Sobel and his associate John Schoenberger as the architects. Although there were some difficulties

with Sobel before the job was finished, few could find fault with his contemporary design. The construction firm of Barber and DeAtley was selected to build the Temple, and for such a large job, construction proceeded rather smoothly and more or less on schedule.

Rabbi Neuman was well suited to bridge the gap between old Reform families and the new families from Conservative and Orthodox backgrounds. In his youth in Poland, he had studied at Talmudic academies, had been imprisoned in concentration camps, and had lost his family in the Holocaust. After the war he came to the United States, studied at Hebrew Union College, was ordained in 1958, and served as



Prof. Gary Porton of the University of Illinois Department of Religious Studies.

rabbi at Temple Judah in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. As rabbi at Sinai Temple, his primary aim was to integrate the newcomers into the congregation. His other goals were to encourage activities for youth, primarily teenagers, to upgrade the religious and Hebrew schools, and to develop adult education programs that would draw upon the rich resources of the university. Foremost among those he drew upon was Gary Porton, a professor in the Department of Religious Studies who specialized in post-Biblical Judaism. Gary took over

the job of teaching the confirmation class, and continued to teach the confirmands for the next thirty years. Gary also worked with the rabbi on the adult education program, and frequently served the congregation as “acting rabbi” when Rabbi Neuman was absent.

The first years in the new Temple were exhilarating times—a “golden age,” according to Michael Tepper, president from 1977 to 1979: “Our

membership was growing, our finances were healthy, and interest in the Congregation by our members was high.” The Board was occupied in devising rules for the use and operation of the building. There were to be no shellfish, pork, or milk with meat prepared in the kitchen and no gambling in the social hall. There were rules about the distribution of keys, use of Temple facilities by outside groups, and the serving of alcohol. The Board had to provide for maintenance, both janitorial and landscaping. Decorating decisions had to be made, and an Art Selection Committee, chaired by Ruth Tager, was formed to determine what was needed, how to select pieces of art, and when to accept or refuse gifts. To begin with, the Temple needed an “eternal light,” a menorah, ark curtains, a rug for the lounge area, fixtures for the garden, and a museum cabinet to hold the valuable smaller gifts. The interior of the Temple was outfitted with pews that could be moved to accommodate a central aisle for weddings and other ceremonies. Ruth Tager worked closely with Irving Schwartz, a local architect, in choosing the interior furniture. Talented leaders emerged to divide the responsibilities and do the tremendous amount of work required. Rabbi Neuman, who was particularly energetic, insisted on being deferred to with regard to the religious services, including the choral and organ music; the use of the Temple for family events such as bar and bat mitzvahs, weddings, and funerals; and the entire range of educational programs. The Board was led by experienced members who did not hesitate to tackle the myriad decisions involved in the day-to-day operation and budget. The Sisterhood raised funds for the school and other special needs and worked at creating a close-knit Congregation by implementing social programs. The Congregation, in particular the newcomers, perhaps because they felt the new Temple belonged to them as much as it did to the older families, was more willing than ever to volunteer for committee work as well as for cleaning and painting classrooms. In his quest to reunite the Jewish



Rabbi Neuman and his wife, Eva.

community, elder statesman Ezra Levin became a one-man committee assigned the job of bringing back to the fold as many as possible of the older members who had resigned for various reasons over the years.

One of the major obstacles to integrating the large number of new congregants from conservative and traditional religious backgrounds was the Friday evening service, which lacked emotional appeal for many of these new members. Although in other respects they participated fully in the educational and social life of the Temple, a large number of them preferred to attend the Conservative and Orthodox services held for students at the Hillel Foundation. Since 1975, however, a group of members had been holding a traditional second-day Rosh Hashanah service in the Temple itself. In February 1978 Lynn Wachtel and Barbara Friedberg wrote to the Board requesting that the entire traditional High Holy Day service be held simultaneously with the Reform service in the kindergarten-first-grade classroom, which could hold 100 people. There was a portable ark in the youth lounge, and they proposed borrowing a Torah from the main sanctuary. Their letter included a list of twenty-one individuals and families from among the many members who supported the idea. The Board appointed a committee chaired by Helen Levin to study the proposal, and on May 2 the committee reported its support for the

proposal by a vote of 4-2. After much discussion the Board itself agreed by 7-5. These narrow votes indicate the strong concern of many members that such a move would divide the Congregation such that Sinai Temple would end up with two congregations sharing the same building. Some were also concerned that a separate minyan would undermine the authority of the rabbi. In the end the Board approved the motion with the stipulation that after the holidays the participants would submit an evaluation, and that the traditional service would be under the supervision of the rabbi. The traditional minyan has now existed for three decades and, in spite of the original concerns, has resulted in a stronger and more unified Congregation. Sinai Temple now proudly claims to have been the first Reform congregation to formalize such an arrangement.

Rabbi Neuman retired in 1987 after leading the Congregation during thirteen years of growth in every direction. After a year serving a congregation in East Berlin as East Germany's first new rabbi in twenty-five years, he returned to his home in Champaign with his new bride, Eva Grünstein, a professor of anthropology at Humboldt University, Berlin, and has continued to contribute his wisdom and advice to the Temple as Rabbi Emeritus.

Rabbi Brad Bloom was selected to be Rabbi Neuman's successor. Unlike Rabbi Neuman, who was fifty-two years old and had held several rabbinical positions before coming to Champaign, Rabbi Bloom was younger and much less experienced. In addition to being an ordained rabbi, Bloom held a degree in social work, and his tenure as rabbi, from 1987 to 1995, reflected his focus on the family within the Congregation. He introduced the Toddler Sabbath, the Infant-Mother group to deal with parenting issues, the "havurah" program as a "congregational extended family," a regular Family Service followed by a pot-luck dinner, a "young leadership" program for young couples and singles, and special programs to aid interfaith couples in making Jewish homes.

Rabbi Bloom also differed from his predecessors in voicing his concern about the weakening of spiritual life in the Congregation. In this matter he was influenced by the thought of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, one of the leading thinkers of contemporary Judaism. Like Heschel, Rabbi Bloom argued that the Reform congregation was not only about Jewish identity, fellowship, community, and life-cycle celebrations but also about the soul and the individual congregant's relationship with God. What made the teaching of Judaism important, he wrote, was its answer to the ultimate questions and problems of human existence. The goal of religious education was to teach each child to dedicate his or her life to applying the sacred values of our tradition, and the Friday evening service should be a time when the Congregation shares in a spiritual experience. After a decade during which the primary focus of the Congregation had been on the construction and enjoyment of its new home, on the ritual aspects of the service, and on the organization of social and educational programs, it did appear that the inner meaning of Judaism was not emphasized. The problem, never solved, was how to go about incorporating a spiritual experience into the ongoing life of the Temple, and those active in the Temple may have felt that the feelings of fellowship through shared labors already provided an adequate spiritual experience.

Many of the problems that the Congregation faced in the 1987-1995 period were the result of increases in membership. By 1988 the membership had grown to 300 families. There were split sessions in the Religious School—9 to 11 A.M. and 11 A.M. to 1 P.M. In addition to sheer numbers, the composi-



Brad Bloom, Sinai Temple's rabbi from 1987 to 1995, with his daughter Leah and wife Linda dressed for Purim.

tion of the membership was changing. In 1988, for example, a large number of people applied for membership as individuals, either because they were unmarried or were married to a non-Jew. The Board found it necessary to deal with the question of whether non-Jews could serve on Temple committees and on the Board of Trustees. It was decided that only Jews should be members of the Board, but that in every other respect spouses or committed partners of Jews who wished to "associate with the Jewish faith" would be considered full members of the Congregation. Increases in the membership also put additional demands on the Temple budget. The educational program needed upgrading, facilities were overcrowded, and salary raises for the staff were overdue. Inflation compounded the problem, and consequently, in June 1989, the Board implemented the present graduated dues structure. Another new obligation was added in May 1988, when Nancy Tepper, who had served as Religious School principal for the past ten years, decided to retire. On the recommendation of Rabbi Bloom, the Board voted to hire a full-time director of religious education, ideally a person with an advanced degree in Jewish education. Eileen Wood, who became the first educator to fill the position, resigned after two years. Since then, a number of educators have served for relatively short periods, and finding a qualified person who would remain in the position for a reasonable length of time has been difficult.

As president in 1989-1991 Stan Levy was more than equal to Rabbi Bloom in his discontent with the inner life of the Congregation. He was concerned with the noninvolvement of the membership in social action programs, in the apathy toward recruiting new and retaining old members, and in "an absence of an attitude and a perspective of caring and sharing of joys, sorrows, and achievements of both young and old." He called a special meeting of the Congregation to discuss these problems and to assess the members' own perceptions of the Temple's strengths and weaknesses.



The sanctuary, completed in 1975, was designed by the Chicago firm of Walter Sobel with associate John Schoenberger. The construction was supervised by Temple member Don Brotherson. The beautiful inlaid wooden ark doors, designed by Rosalind Faiman Weinberg and donated by Helen Levin in memory of her daughter Judy, were installed in 2003. They replaced the 3-dimensional red, purple, and fuchsia handwoven textile ark curtain by renowned local artist Dot Replinger, now hanging on the wall, which was a gift in honor of Clarence and Adele Libman given by their children. The massive bronze *menorah* adorning the sanctuary wall is the work of artist Ted Egri of Taos, New Mexico. It was donated in 1976 by Sisterhood "Canasta Club" members Freddie Fabert, Betty Greenstein, Merle Hamburg, Audrey Leavitt, Helen Levin, Helen Loeb, Lee Roland, Faye Sholem, and Sonya Sholem. *Photograph by Benjamin Halpern.*

One hundred members of the Congregation gathered in a forum on February 25, 1990. On the positive side, the assembly enumerated the strengths of the Congregation: its diversity of membership, abundance of talent, good reputation in the Champaign-Urbana community, open admission to High Holy Day services, flexible dues structure, growing membership, and excellent Religious School. The members were also pleased with the democratic nature of the Congregation: there was no fear of speaking one's mind, and there were opportunities for leadership regardless of personal wealth or financial contributions.

On the other hand, the group perceived the needs of the

Congregation to include a paid program director who would develop more social activities for senior citizens, more social programs for single and divorced adults, and adult programming for social purposes instead of for fund-raising. They called for more adult programs with a focus on religious education, for encouraging more families to become involved and to participate in Temple activities and programs, for an additional focus on bar and bat mitzvah training in the Hebrew school, for a men's group or Brotherhood to match the Sisterhood, and for a better delin-

eration of the place of the non-Jewish spouse in Temple activities and leadership. They complained that the present leadership was remote and not accessible. In terms of future direction, the forum mentioned the need for an expansion of the Temple that would provide room for the burgeoning Religious School and a sanctuary for the traditional minyan.

The Board took these complaints seriously, and a number of new initiatives were taken in recruiting, adult education, and social programming. The most important new initiative was the establishment of havurot. The havurot movement had begun in some Reform and Conservative synagogues in the 1970s with the formation of small intermediary groups between the family and the congregation as a whole to combat



Ruth Berkson, left, and Eva Rosenfield, c. 1988, present an award to Sol Cohen for his dedicated involvement in and contributions to the Jewish community of Champaign-Urbana.

the isolation of members in large synagogues. Havurot would celebrate holidays together, socialize informally, share joys, and help each other in times of need.



Sinai Temple has always prided itself on the high quality of its religious school's educators, programming, and resources. Here is a young group of students in 1979.

The most important change in the history of the Congregation during the later years of Rabbi Bloom was the demise of the Sinai Temple Sisterhood. Underlying this was the national trend toward the movement of women into the workplace. The causes were both economic and social: the need for two incomes and women's desire for gender equality. Beginning in the fall of 1994 the Sisterhood, now renamed "Women of Sinai Temple," could find no one to fill its leadership positions and had to function without officers and without its usual activities. It officially dissolved in May 1998. Under different names a women's auxiliary had been in existence since 1889, preceding the founding of the Congregation itself. Over the years it had been the major source of the Congregation's vitality, raising money for and supervising the Religious School, and organizing the social and cultural

events central to congregational life. The president in 1994, Len Heumann, had to find new sources of funding for the Religious School, and he had to transfer oversight functions to the Education Committee. The present educator is Beri Schwitzer, who succeeded Jean Deichman in August 2003.

In general, the period of Rabbi Bloom had been one of attempting to respond to new challenges in Temple life. How to improve, enliven, and attract more participation in the programs and the religious services were the important issues of his period. On the practical level, efforts went into the integration of mixed couples, meeting the needs of the

entire family from infants to seniors, creating “extended families” through the havurot, and working on a new dues structure to raise funds in an equitable manner. During his eight years of leadership, Rabbi Bloom grew in competence and stature, and in 1995 he was offered a position as rabbi of Congregation B’nai Israel in Sacramento, California. Rabbi Bloom was succeeded by Rabbi Norman Mark Klein, who came to Champaign from Waco, Texas.

The first business of the “Klein Era” was the building of an addition to the Temple. Expansion had been suggested as early as October 1980, though it was not realized until nineteen years later. At the time, the



The Shabbat Bible Study group, originally founded by Esther Steinberg in 1990 and led by her for many years, reflected the desire for adult programs with a focus on religious education. Shown here in 2001 at the home of Anne Weisel are (from left to right) Edythe Davis, Bea Tepper, Lianne Anderson, Eleanor Blum, Gert Kushner, Sarra Khamarmer, Bernice Lieberman, and Anne Weisel, and (foreground from left) Anne Martel, Hilda Banks, and Blanche Sudman. Along with learning about the Jewish scriptures, members also enjoyed the social aspects of studying together.

Board discussed urgent needs for additional space for classrooms, adult education, a seminar room, and the holding of the traditional minyan. It was not until 1988 that the mortgage on the new Temple was burned and consideration of expansion could begin in earnest. In 1994 Len Heumann brought the problem to the Board, and soon afterward a local architecture firm, Gary Olsen and Associates, was commissioned to



Rabbi Norman Klein and his wife Andrea lead the hundreds of 100th anniversary gala guests in the chanting of the *Havdalah* blessings. Klein became Sinai's rabbi in 1995. Photo courtesy of Illini Studio.

design the addition. Under Heumann's successor, Michael Shapiro, committees were formed to work with the architect and builder and to initiate campaigns to raise the \$1.7 million needed for the project. On October 17, 1999, after an immense amount of work by members of the Board and Congregation, the new wing was dedicated. Lisa Libman took

on the job that Ruth Tager had filled in the 1970s and organized the raising of funds and selection of interior furnishings for the new wing.

Under Rabbi Klein's leadership Sinai Temple has been an active participant in a program coordinated by the UAHC called S2K, or Synagogue 2000. The program calls on Reform congregations to review all

aspects of temple life for the purpose of introducing innovations that would strengthen the bonds within the Congregation, stimulate members to become more involved in Temple activities, rethink the meaning and purpose of the Jewish congregation in America, and envision the synagogue of the future as a *kehillah kedushah*, a holy community. Among the most notable results of this program at Sinai have been experiments with changes in the Friday evening services, including the formation of a Temple Music committee, the organization of the Shabbat Singers, who learn traditional songs and bring them to Friday evening services, a reduction in the role of the traditional choir, and the introduction of more congregational singing. One of Rabbi Klein's particular innovations has been to add and lead a new Shabbat morning service, the Torah Minyan, separate from the already existing Traditional Minyan. The Torah Minyan includes Torah reading, discussion of the reading, and singing. Finally, he has inaugurated a third Shabbat morning service almost entirely in English that is held simulta-



Beri Schwitzer, who became Sinai Temple's Religious School Director in 2003, played herself in the "West Sinai Story" at the 100th anniversary gala. Photo courtesy of Illini Studio.

neously with the Traditional Minyan once a month at the request of interested members.

During the last decade, Sinai Temple has strengthened its relationship with the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation whose executive director is Lee Melhado. As part of its program to support Jewish education in the community, the Federation assumed responsibility for paying half the salary of the Temple Educator. In addition, it has provided funds for acquisitions to the Temple library, in particular a superb video collection on all aspects of the Jewish heritage, housed in the Urbana Free Library with special access provided for the Temple library. The Federation also works with the Temple Cemetery Committee and provides educational programs for Jewish seniors, many of whom are Sinai Temple members.

Jewish life in the community has also been enriched by the university's Program in Jewish Culture and Society, founded in 1997 through the efforts of Professors Michael Shapiro and Gary Porton, both of whom have served as Temple presidents.

On the horizon are new problems and continuation of older ones. One of these is the diversity of opinions within the Congregation concerning the recent policies of the government of Israel. The continuation of violence has led some members to question the role of Israel as the ultimate repository of Jewish culture in contrast to others who continue to consider Israel as the center of Jewish life. Another new challenge, and perhaps opportunity, has been the establishment in Champaign-Urbana of a Chabad Center with objectives of its own. The Chabad Center could be a rival for the support of Jews in the community or it could intensify an interest in Judaism from which Sinai could benefit. An additional problem is intermarriage and a continuation of the search for ways to integrate the non-Jewish spouse into Temple life.

Finally, how can an American Jewish congregation like our own survive and flourish in the new century when many in our congregation

are ambivalent about Zionism and feel Jewish existence less threatened by anti-Semitism than by attrition through intermarriage and assimilation? Where should we take our stand in the face of the religious revivalism, growth of fundamentalism, and fear of rapid social change that seems to animate so much religious behavior throughout the world? Finally, how should we, as Jews, respond to the assaults on humane values taking place today? The answer may be to reaffirm the roots in liberal Judaism of the original founders of Sinai Temple.

While holding fast to the spiritual power and beauty of our Jewish rituals, we might do well to reconnect with Reform Judaism's devotion to social justice and social action inherited from its prophetic and rabbinic traditions and its dedication to science, reason, universal brotherhood, and individual conscience as a child of the Enlightenment.



The sanctuary's *ner tamid*, "Eternal Light," by Ludwig Wolpert is made of a hand-wrought bronze bowl shaped with cutout Hebrew words from Psalm 36:10, "...In Thy light do we see light." Five large flame-like shapes extend above. This gift was donated in 1975 by Dr. and Mrs. Irving Weissman. Photo by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin.

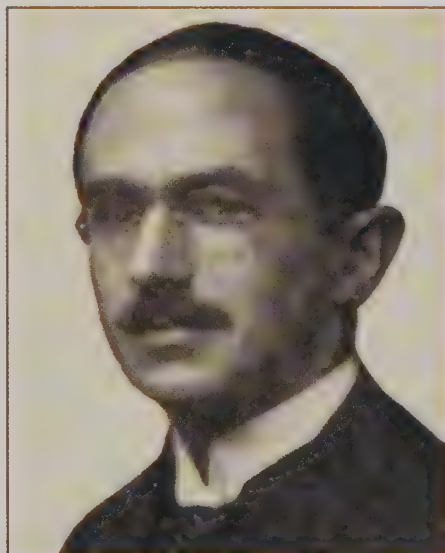
Sinai's Spiritual Leaders before 1951

by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin*

Until Bernard Martin became Sinai Temple's first full-time rabbi in 1951, the congregation was served by a long line of ordained rabbis, rabbinic students, and Jewish scholars, including the distinguished Dr. Abram Sachar and Dr. Armin

DR. KOLLER, DR. JUNG LEAD SERVICES ON NOVEMBER 9

Religious services at the Sinai Temple November 9 were conducted by Dr. Koller and Dr. Jung in the absence of Rabbi Frankel. Dr. Koller read the services and Dr. Jung spoke on the historical facts explaining the division of American Jews into reformed and orthodox and pleaded for a closer co-operation between the two. *From Hillel Post archives.*



Dr. Moses Jung. *From Hillel Post archives.*



Armin Koller. *Photo courtesy of Alice Berkson.*

Koller. Once Hillel Foundation opened the doors of its first facility ever on the University of Illinois campus in 1923, many of these talented and inspirational men came to play a dual role by leading Sinai Temple's religious services as well as those at Hillel.

Armin Koller, father of Sinai Temple member Ruth Berkson and grandfather of Alice Berkson, was an esteemed professor of German at the University of Illinois. When needed at either Hillel or Sinai Temple, he would graciously lead the congregations in religious services. This would happen most often when Rabbi Frankel was called out of town. At times, Dr. Koller would conduct the service and Dr. Moses Jung, a professor of religion, would deliver



Rabbi Frankel

the sermon. Dr. Jung assisted Frankel for a brief time during 1924 and



Rabbi Adolph Finkelstein.
From Hillel Post archives.

1925. He was responsible for the offering of Hebrew language instruction at Hillel. Dr. Jung left his position at the university in 1925 to assume an assistantship role at the Hillel on the campus of the University of Iowa. In 1929, Jung was offered the new position of Jewish Chair in the School of Religion at Iowa.

In order to fill the void in Champaign-Urbana's Jewish community left by Dr. Jung's departure for Iowa City, Rabbi Frankel recruited Rabbi Adolph Finkelstein in the fall of 1925 to be Sinai Temple's associate

*The author appreciates the assistance of Lisa Libman who provided research for this essay.

Rabbi Finkelstein to Assist Rabbi Frankel

Rabbi Adolph Finkelstein has come to the Twin Cities to act as associate rabbi of Sinai Temple and associate director of the Foundation. He hails from Goldsboro, N. C., and received his degrees from the University of Cincinnati and the Hebrew Union College where he was president of his class. It was during his college years that he met and came to know Rabbi Frankel.

His work will be essentially the same as that of the present rabbi. He will alternate with him in delivering the weekly sermons, and will conduct fireside discussion groups on Wednesday evenings.

He looks forward with much pleasure to his work here and states that he expects the associations he will form to be of lasting and fine influence in his life.

From Hillel Post archives.

rabbi and Hillel Foundation's associate director.

The next rabbi to assume the role of associate rabbi of Sinai Temple and assistant director at the University of Illinois Hillel Foundation was Benjamin Goldstein. A *Hillel Post* article records that he was a native of Guthrie, Oklahoma, born in 1902, and a 1922 graduate of the University of California. His Master of Hebrew Literature was earned at the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York.

From *Omaha Blues: A Memory Loop* by Joseph Lelyveld we learn, "Stephen Wise's Western Union telegram reached Ben Goldstein in Berkeley in January 1929. Fresh out of the seminary, Ben had moved with his bride to Champaign, Illinois..." This book may have more information about Rabbi Goldstein than any other. In his review of *Omaha Blues*, found online at <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/publications/archives-ncb/Fall05/NCBnewspage5.html>, Joseph J. Wydeven states, "Lelyveld also devotes two long chapters to the 'one adult in my life who seemed consistently and reliably available,' Ben Goldstein. Ben befriended the boy and took him frequently to baseball games—apparently telling him little of his past, of his connections to Communist politics, and of his brief career as a rabbi in Montgomery, where he had given himself and his congregation much trouble by speaking out in defense of the Scottsboro boys (nine black teenagers who in 1931 had been falsely accused of raping two white women)."

Upon leaving the Champaign-Urbana area, Goldstein became the rabbi of Temple Beth Or in Montgomery, Alabama. In the history section of Beth Or's Web site, Goldstein is not mentioned. It appears that not much is written about Rabbi Goldstein, but as stated in some recollections by Beatrice Holtzman Schneiderman written by Laura Kaufman and found online at <http://www.jwa.org/discover/recollections/schneiderman.html>:

In the mid-1930s, her synagogue hired a new rabbi, Ben Goldstein. His clear vision and courage helped to focus Bea's energies on

justice. Goldstein preached that one could not speak of social justice and then stand on the sidelines when the limits of fairness were being tested. Challenging local racism and strong anti-union sentiment, Rabbi Goldstein helped develop a sharecroppers' union, and both my grandparents joined in his efforts, raising bail money for labor organizers. My grandmother credited Goldstein with "making a radical" out of her.

In 1931, when the "Scottsboro Boys"—nine Black teenagers—were wrongly convicted of rape and sentenced to death, Goldstein openly and passionately advocated on their behalf. Mama Bea joined the committee of support. The Scottsboro case brought plenty of attention to sleepy Montgomery. National leaders of the early civil rights movement trooped through town, as did journalists from progressive publications such as *The Nation*. Many of these leaders and journalists ended up camping out at my grandparents' house or the houses of their small circle of progressive friends.

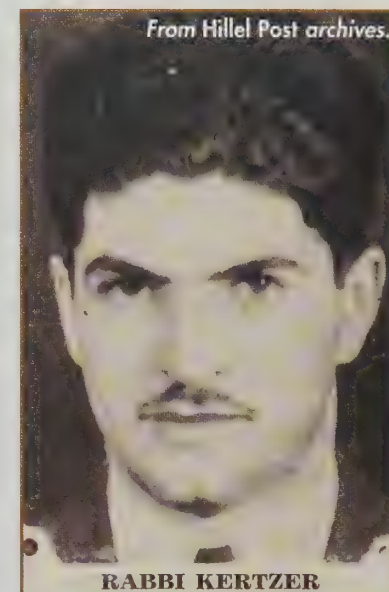
Rabbi Goldstein's open support for the Scottsboro Boys disturbed most Temple Beth Or members. Montgomery's mayor threatened trouble if Goldstein continued to call attention to the injustices of the Scottsboro case. Afraid of losing business and broader community acceptance, a majority of the synagogue board began to push for the Rabbi's resignation. Only my grandfather and one other board member stepped forward to defend Rabbi Goldstein.

The role that Rabbi Goldstein played in the infamous Scottsboro case is also recognized in the following extract from the *Jewish Currents* July 2004 obituary of Morris U. Schappes (1907–2004), its longtime editor:

In 1941, Schappes was among 40 teachers fired from the City University system for their political beliefs. Summoned before the Rapp-Coudert Committee, he refused to become an informer and served more than 13 months in prison (Sing Sing, Dannemora and Wallkill). "Forty years later but not too late" is how he described the apology that the City University proffered in 1981 to Morris and other victims of this purge.

Writing in 1982 about his time in prison in the 1940s, Morris described his determination, "as a way of fighting the system, to make the most of my time there, because if there is anything I hate it is to waste time—our most precious possession." Indeed, it was in prison where he began, in earnest, his studies in American Jewish history through books sent to him by Rabbi Ben Goldstein (1902–1953), who "from his pulpit in Alabama," Morris wrote, "had dared to support the Scottsboro Case... It is not true that 'walls do not a prison make,' because they do. But it is what can be done behind those walls that is significant. I did what I could—facilitated by Sonya, family, and a movement continually concerned, and in a society sufficiently democratic so that the concern could be made manifest."

Morris Kertzer, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary, was the next assistant director at Hillel. He served the Champaign-Urbana community from 1934 to 1936. His 2-year tenure was to be but a stepping stone leading to a long and distinguished career as a rabbi, educator, and author.



While on campus, Rabbi Morris Kertzer was the first to conduct religious services in Hillel's new chapel, donated by Ramah Lodge Woman's Auxiliary B'nai B'rith and dedicated on Sunday, November 1, 1936. Less than three months later, Rabbi Kertzer left to take the post as director of the Alabama Hillel Foundation.

Kertzer stayed in Alabama for about 2 years. He followed in the footsteps of a former Champaign Hillel assistant director when he moved to Iowa City in 1939 to replace Dr. Moses Jung as the Jewish Chair of the University of Iowa School of Religion. During Jung's time as the Jewish

Chair, the local Hillel lost its affiliation with the national organization and was renamed the Philo Club. In 1940, Rabbi Kertzer reestablished formal ties with the national B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation and changed the Philo Club's name back to the Hillel Club. The Web site of Agudas Achim congregation of Iowa City reports that Kertzer was the chair of the Iowa City Interfaith Council in 1942.

Rabbi Kertzer joined the U.S. Army during World War II, and served as a chaplain. According to a *Jewish News of Greater Phoenix* article (June 25, 2004) written by Ruth Ellen Gruber of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and staff writer Michael Miklofsky: "It was June 9, 1944—just five days after Allied troops had liberated [Rome] from the Nazis. And on that first Friday night of freedom, an American Jewish chaplain led 4,000

Rabbi Perley



From Hillel Post archives.

Jews in the Shehecheyanu prayer. The American chaplain was Lt. Morris Kertzer, a young rabbi from Iowa City, Iowa. Attached to the U.S. Fifth Army, he had landed with thousands of other U.S. troops at Anzio and witnessed the Allied liberation of Rome on June 4."

In February of 1937, Martin Perley was welcomed as the new assistant director of the Hillel Foundation, and Sinai Temple greeted him as its next temporary rabbi. A well-traveled person, Rabbi Perley was often referred to as a modern Marco Polo.

He graduated from the Jewish Institute of Religion in 1934, and then took the pulpit for 2 years as rabbi of Beth Israel Synagogue in Melbourne, Australia, the only Reform synagogue in the country at that time. He left his position there to travel through India, the Suez Canal, and Palestine. The rabbi's next stop was Champaign-Urbana. Leaving Sinai Temple and Hillel in 1938, Perley sailed once again to Australia to marry Maie Clements, a noted Australian author. Upon the couple's return to America, Rabbi Perley assumed the position of director of a new Hillel at Indiana University, the twelfth chapter in the country. Rabbi Perley had two brothers who were rabbis, Rabbi Hayim Gorem Perelmutter of Chicago, Illinois, and Rabbi Bernard Perelmutter.

The position of associate rabbi of Sinai Temple and director of student activity at the University of Illinois Hillel Foundation was next held by Selwyn D. Ruslander, who came to the Twin Cities from Texas in 1938. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he was ordained in 1935 at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio, and had served as rabbi of a congregation in Port Arthur.

In 1939, Rabbi Ruslander left his posts in the Champaign-Urbana area to go to Cincinnati, where he was appointed Director of Youth Education for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the first director of the National Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY). From 1942 to 1945 he was on a leave of absence as a navy chaplain. He earned a combat star while with the Eighth Fleet in the Mediterranean, becoming the first Jewish chaplain in the history of the Navy to serve with a combat



Rabbi Selwyn D. Ruslander. Photo from Hillel Post archives.

fleet. In 1947, Rabbi Ruslander became the full-time rabbi of Temple Israel in Dayton, Ohio. In 1953, during Ruslander's tenure at Temple Israel, a new sanctuary was constructed on the grounds of Salem and Emerson Avenues. The new structure of impressive modern architecture was erected in front of and connected to the original building. Rabbi Ruslander remained active as the temple's rabbi and with the National Jewish Welfare Board's Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy and the CCAR's Committee on Chaplaincy until his death in 1969.

Rabbi Ruslander was succeeded at both Sinai Temple and Hillel in autumn 1939 by Rabbi Judah Goldin, fresh from a position as rabbi of a congregation in Germantown, Pennsylvania. A native New Yorker who graduated from City College, Columbia, and the Jewish Theological Seminary, his eloquence impressed the Sinai Temple congregants. Goldin's responsibilities at Hillel were to include assisting in conducting services, collaborating with Dr. Abram Sachar in the teaching of

credit courses offered by Hillel, and acting in an advisory capacity for the various Foundation activities. Rabbi Goldin left the area in 1943 to join the faculty of Duke University, but returned to Illinois in 1945 to replace Rabbi Albert Silverman who had signed on as director upon Goldin's departure in 1943.

Judah Goldin went on to teach at Yale University and to become emeritus professor of Oriental studies at the University of Pennsylvania. While at Yale, he chaired its Judaica department and

Photo at left from Hillel Post archives.



Rabbi Goldin, journalist, Talmudic scholar, cyclist, family man; now associate director of the University of Illinois Hillel Foundation.

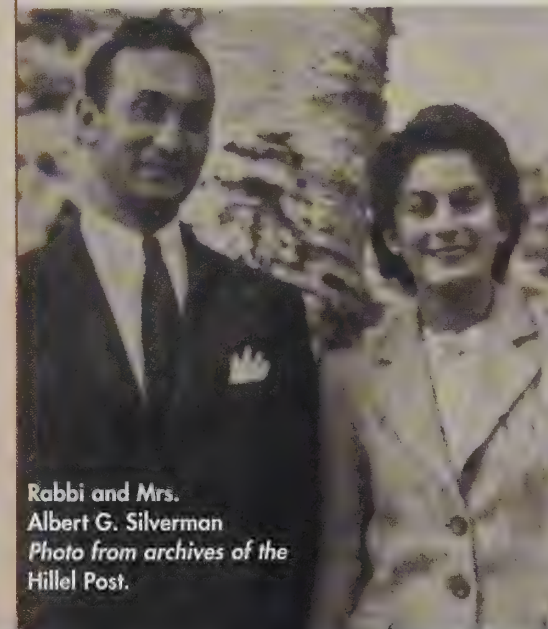
wrote, translated, and edited a number of books on Jewish themes. Among the best known of his books are *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* (1955), *The Jewish Expression* (1976), and *Studies in Midrash and Related Literature* (1989).

On May 6, 1996, at New York University, the National Foundation for Jewish Culture held its Third Annual Jewish Cultural Achievement Awards (JCAA) in Scholarship. Professor Judah Goldin was honored with an award for Textual Studies. The Foundation's online press release describing this event quoted a section of the preface to Goldin's 1988 *Studies in Midrash and Related Literature* that referred to comments by two of Goldin's former students:

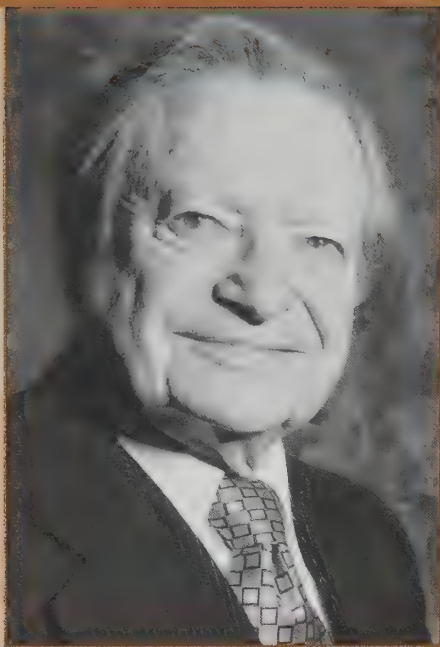
As a humanist, he reads rabbinic texts not only as a legal and exegetical resource but also—as literature! He views the texts not only within the context of Judaism and not only against the cultural background of the ancient Mediterranean world, but also within the intellectual context of the universal human issues they address. No scholar has done more to clarify what is happening in the non-legal parts of rabbinic literature, or to place that literature squarely within the realm of humanistic studies.

The next in the long line of scholars and spiritual leaders was Rabbi Albert G. Silverman who made his appearance in 1943. A native of New York, Rabbi Silverman remained in his position at Hillel Foundation until the spring of 1945, at which time he was assigned to a Hillel serving the metropolitan Boston area. He was to work with the students at Harvard University and Radcliffe College.

POST WELCOMES SILVERMANS



Rabbi and Mrs. Albert G. Silverman
Photo from archives of the Hillel Post.



Rabbi Herman Schaalman has had a distinguished career and exciting life since being ordained at the HUC-JIR in Cincinnati. He has spent the bulk of his rabbinical career in Chicago.

Another of Sinai Temple's assistant rabbis was Herman E. Schaalman. He was called upon to serve during the years that Rabbi Martin was in the armed service. Rabbi Schaalman, a native of Munich, Germany, was ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati. He was also awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR). Rabbi Schaalman has been affiliated with Emanuel Congregation of Chicago since 1955 after serving at Temple Judah of Cedar Rapids, Iowa from

1941-1949, and serving as Director of the Chicago and Mid-West Regions of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations from 1949-1955.

The rabbi served on the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, and currently serves as Chair of the Advisory Committee of the American Jewish Committee. He is past-president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and served as Chairman of the Ethics Committee, also as Chairman of the Committee of Patrilineal Descent, and of the CCAR's Mixed Marriage Committee.

Rabbi Schaalman was the founder of the first camp for the Reform Movement at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin (OSRUD), and has published articles in various journals, primarily in the field of theology. The rabbi is co-editor of a book titled *Preaching Biblical Texts*. In recognition of a career devoted to the service of others, Rabbi Schaalman was cited as

one of the outstanding foreign-born citizens of Chicago by the Immigrants' Service League, and holds the Jewish Chautauqua Society resident lectureship at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, and Chicago Theological Seminary. In September 2004, the Chicago City Park District dedicated a park in the rabbi's honor.

The last recorded rabbi who led Sinai Temple's congregation was Sanford E. Saperstein. It is believed that he served Champaign-Urbana's Jewish community in 1946, but it is not known how long he stayed. Rabbi Saperstein was born in 1919 in Troy, New York. One of his brief biographies mentioned Sinai Temple as one of his three earliest pulpits along with a temple in Athens, Georgia, and one in Pontiac, Michigan.

Saperstein's education included a master's degree in Marriage and Family Counseling from Columbia University and an MSW from Adelphi University. He was awarded his Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, from HUC-JIR. The lion's share of Saperstein's rabbinic career was spent at Temple Beth Am of Merrick, New York. He arrived there in 1957, and spent the next 27 years as Beth Am's religious leader. He became Rabbi Emeritus in 1984 upon his retirement.

Rabbi Saperstein went back to serving as a full-time rabbi in 1987 when he took the helm at Temple Beth Israel in Longboat Key, Florida. He remained there until 1995 when he again became Rabbi Emeritus.

According to his 2005 obituary, "On a national level, he served on the Commission on Mental Health at the invitation of President Jimmy Carter. For many years he was a member of the Board of Governors of the New York Board of Rabbis as well as Chairman of the Committee on Judaism and Health of the Central Conference of American Rabbis."



Rabbi Sanford Saperstein, the 2005 Eternal Light Award Recipient from the Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies, reflects upon his life and the history of Catholic-Jewish relations in an April 2005 videotape.

The Rabbis of Sinai Temple

by Nancy Tepper and Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin

Sinai Temple has been blessed with a distinguished past rabbinate. In our early years we were also served by many gifted and dedicated individuals. Included are Benjamin Frankel, founding national director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation; Abram Sachar, founding president of Brandeis University and also a national director of Hillel; and Sally Priesand, the world's first ordained female rabbi.

1904-1915

Rabbis shared with nearby communities

1915-1923

Rabbinic students from HUC

1923-1929

Rabbi Benjamin Frankel*

1929-1947

Dr. Abram Sachar*

1947-1950

Rabbinic students from HUC

1951-1957

Rabbi Bernard Martin (first full-time rabbi); Rabbi Stephen Schaeffer and Rabbi Herman Schaalman served while Martin was in the armed service

1958-1964

Rabbi Henry Cohen

1964-1968

Rabbi A. James Rudin

1968

Student Rabbi Sally Priesand

1968-1974

Rabbi Samuel Weingart

1974-1987

Rabbi Isaac Neuman

1987-1995

Rabbi Brad Bloom

1995-

Rabbi Norman Mark Klein

*Assisted by University of Illinois professors and Hillel rabbis.

early schooling, Martin entered the University of Chicago where he received a B.A. with honors in 1947. Thereafter, he studied law for a year at the University of Virginia. From there, he entered Hebrew Union College where he earned a B.H.L. with honors in 1949, as well as an M.H.L. He was ordained in 1951.

After his ordination, Martin became rabbi of Sinai Temple in Champaign, Illinois, and served until 1957 (except for the years 1953-1955 when he served as a chaplain in Japan for the U.S. Army). He became associate rabbi of Chicago Sinai Congregation in 1957, and served until 1961 at which time he became senior rabbi at Mount Zion Hebrew Congregation in St. Paul, Minnesota, a position he retained until 1965. During most of his years in Champaign and Chicago, he was enrolled at the University of Illinois where he received an M.A. (1957) and a Ph.D. (1961), both in philosophy.

Rabbi Martin left the pulpit in 1966 to become Abba Hillel Silver Associate Professor of Jewish Studies at Case Western Reserve University. He was a professor from 1968 until his death in 1982.

As a philosopher and theologian, Rabbi Martin actively participated in the American Philosophical Association, the American Academy for Jewish Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, the American Academy of Religion, the National Association of Professors of Hebrew, and the Association for Jewish Studies. He served as chairman of the Executive Committee of the Special Interest Group on Theology of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Dr. Martin was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Cleveland Jewish Community Federation and the Board of the Cleveland chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Rabbi Martin was married to the former Nancy Louise Platt of Danville, Illinois, and was the father of two children, Rachel and Joseph.

Bernard Martin, 1951-1957

The son of Helen (Hershkowitz) and Benjamin Martin, Bernard Martin was born on March 13, 1928 in Czechoslovakia. He came to America in 1934. Following his



Henry Cohen, 1958–1964

Henry Cohen was born in 1927 in Houston, Texas into a family of Reform rabbis. After graduating from the University of Texas, he entered the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1947, and was ordained in 1953. He served as an army chaplain at Camp Polk, Louisiana, in Korea, and at Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio. In 1955, he became assistant rabbi at Temple Beth-El in Great Neck, New York. In the fall of 1958, Rabbi Cohen became the spiritual leader of Sinai Temple, a “town-and-gown” congregation in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, where he wrote *Come into My Sukkah*. At the University of Illinois he received a Master of Arts degree in the Philosophy of Education and wrote a study on *The Idea of God in Jewish Education*. He also completed a study, *Jewish Life and Thought in the Academic Community*, which was included in Marshall Sklare’s *The Jew in American Society*.

In June 1964, Cohen became the rabbi of Beth David Reform Congregation in Philadelphia. There he initiated a bicultural Black-Jewish nursery school, and was chairman of the Jewish Coalition for Peace, which opposed the war in Vietnam. In addition to numerous articles, Rabbi Cohen wrote two books published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations: *Justice, Justice: A Jewish View of the Black Revolution* (1968) and *Why Judaism?—A Search for Meaning in Jewish Identity* (1973). In 1974, he was part of a group of interfaith clergy (led by Rabbi A. James Rudin) who visited Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel to gain a perspec-



tive on the Middle-East conflict as seen through Arab and Israeli eyes. In 1986, Rabbi Cohen and his wife, Edna, visited the Soviet Union where, among the refuseniks they met, were the parents of Beth David’s Cantor, Lilia Kazansky. The congregation campaigned for the release of David and Clara, the parents, who gained their freedom in 1987. Rabbi Cohen encouraged the formation of Chavurah Lahayyim, to support Central American refugees fleeing persecution. He taught at St. Joseph’s College and was on the Board of the Jewish Community Relations Council.

In 1986, the congregation moved to Gladwyne in the Main Line. From 1990–1992, Rabbi Cohen worked with other clergy to form the Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Main Line, which helps the most helpless of the homeless by providing meals, lodging, and caring in the synagogues and churches. Ever since becoming emeritus in June 1993, Rabbi Cohen has been teaching Introduction to Judaism classes for the UAHC’s Outreach program. He completed a research project for the Jewish Outreach Institute designed to discover what actually happens in the families of those mixed married couples who, at the time of their wedding, made a commitment to give their children a Jewish education. A summary of this research, *Raising Jewish Children in an Interfaith Family*, was published by the JOI in 1996, in the volume, *Making Jewish Outreach Work*. Rabbi Cohen wrote *What’s Special about Judaism?* a book based on his teaching for the UAHC Outreach program. Xlibris published the book in January 2002. In the spring of 2003, Xlibris published a revised edition, which includes a section on *Judaism, Jews and Islam* and an update on *Zionism, Israel and American Jewry*.

Rabbi Cohen has been married for 46 years to Edna, now a retired administrator from the University of the Arts, and they have two daughters, Shelley and Lisa.

A. James Rudin, 1964–1968

Rabbi A. James Rudin was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and grew up in Alexandria, Virginia. He attended Wesleyan University, and received his B.A. degree with academic distinction from George Washington University. He was elected to three national honor societies, and is listed in *Who's Who in Religion*, *Who's Who in the East*, *Who's Who in World Jewry*, and *American Jewish Biographies*.



Photo courtesy of Richard Curtis Assoc.

Rudin received his Master's degree and rabbinical ordination from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1960, and has done graduate studies at the University of Illinois. He has been awarded honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees from HUC-JIR and Saint Leo University.

Prior to joining the American Jewish Committee (AJC) staff in 1968, Rudin served congregations in Kansas City, Missouri and Champaign, Illinois. He was also a U.S. Air Force chaplain in Japan and Korea where his travels included visits to American personnel at the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commissions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1988, Rudin was appointed a member of the Camp David Presidential Interfaith Chapel Committee.

In 1964, Rabbi Rudin participated in a voting rights drive in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and in 1985, he was arrested at an anti-apartheid demonstration at the South African Embassy in Washington, D.C. He is the founder of the National Interreligious Task Force on Black-Jewish Relations, and was a member of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission. In 1991, Rudin led a delegation of Black Christian leaders to

Israel, and from 1996–1997, he played an active role in the interreligious effort to rebuild burned churches in the U.S. He is also a member of the Advisory Committee of the National Museum of the American Indian.

In 1974, Rabbi Rudin was co-leader of the first interreligious study mission to both Arab countries (Lebanon and Jordan) and Israel. He led interreligious delegations to the Belgrade and Madrid Conferences on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) where he pressed for human rights and religious liberty for Soviet Jews and other oppressed peoples. He is a founder of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry.

In 1977, Rabbi Rudin was awarded the "Person of Reconciliation" Award from the Polish Council of Christians and Jews in Warsaw. In the same year, he received the first Joseph Award given by the Villa Nazareth, a Pontifical institution, and in 1999, the International Council of Christians and Jews awarded him its Interfaith Medallion.

Following his retirement in 2000 as AJC's National Interreligious Affairs Director, he was appointed Senior Interreligious Advisor. Rudin has participated in ten meetings with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican, in the U.S., and in Israel. He has also participated in conferences with the World Council of Churches in Geneva and with Eastern Orthodox leaders in Greece.

Rabbi Rudin is a prolific writer, lecturer, and television pundit. In addition to dozens of articles in religious publications, and in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *Newsday*, he has authored or edited several books. He wrote *Israel for Christians: Understanding Modern Israel*, and with his wife, Marcia, *Prison or Paradise? The New Religious Cults*. Rudin co-authored *Why Me? Why Anyone?* Many more credits include being the co-editor of *Evangelicals and Jews in Conversation*, *Evangelicals and Jews in an Age of Pluralism*, *Twenty Years of Jewish-Catholic Relations*, and *A Time to Speak: The Evangelical-Jewish Encounter*.

Rudin's hobbies include collecting memorabilia about the Washington Senators baseball team. He is an avid crossword puzzle fan, and an expert on American popular music. Rabbi Rudin is married to the former Marcia Kaplan of Champaign-Urbana. They have two daughters, Rabbi Eve Sandra Weiner and Jennifer Anne, and a granddaughter. The Rudins live in Sanibel, Florida and New York City.

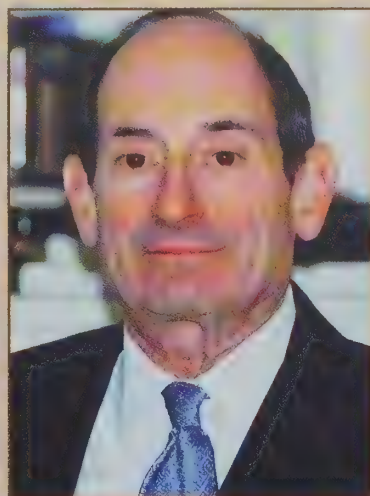
Samuel Weingart, 1968–1974

Rabbi Weingart was born August 22, 1937 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and grew up in Des Moines, Iowa. In 1957, following his graduation from the University of Iowa with a B.A., he enrolled as a rabbinical student at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio, from which he was ordained in 1962. During his studies there, Weingart received a Bachelor's degree in Hebrew letters (B.H.L.) and a M.A.H.L. In 1987, he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from HUC-JIR.

In August 2002, Rabbi Weingart retired from the congregational rabbinate after a 40-year career, which included service as Sinai Temple's rabbi from 1968–1974, and the last fifteen years of his rabbinate in West Lafayette, Indiana at Temple Israel, where he is now Rabbi Emeritus.

Rabbi Weingart is a member of the UAHC Commission on Social Action, the Tippecanoe County Human Relations Commission, and the Greater Lafayette Holocaust Remembrance Committee.

Weingart is married to Kate Weingart, a full professor at Purdue University in the Department of Organizational Leadership. They have a



daughter, Mia. Rabbi Weingart also has a son, Bruce, a daughter, Allyson, and a grandson, Yuri Steselboim.

Isaac Neuman, 1974–1987

Isaac Neuman is Rabbi Emeritus of Sinai Congregation in Champaign, Illinois. Born in Poland in 1922, Neuman received a traditional Jewish education, studying at Etz Chaim in Kalisz, Emek Halacha in Warsaw, and Yeshivat Chachmei in Lublin, all renowned throughout Europe as major Talmudic academies. After the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939, Neuman was imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps. He survived four years in various camps, including Auschwitz, Mauthausen, and Ebensee. His parents, six sisters, and younger brother all perished in the Holocaust. In 1945, Neuman was liberated by American soldiers in Ebensee, Austria.



In 1950, Neuman arrived in the United States. He was later awarded a scholarship from the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. In 1958, he received a B.A. degree in comparative literature and modern languages from the University of Cincinnati. That same year, he was awarded an M.A. in Hebrew letters from the Hebrew Union College.

Before his ordination as a rabbi, Neuman served the Kol Shearith Israel Congregation in the Republic of Panama. During that time, he traveled throughout Latin America recruiting Jewish students to study for the rabbinate. Since his ordination in 1960, he has served Emanuel Congregation in Dothan, Alabama; Temple Judah in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and Sinai Temple in Champaign, Illinois since 1974. Rabbi Neuman was

awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree from the Hebrew Union College in 1985.

In 1987, as a result of negotiations between the United States government and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), and with the assistance of the American Jewish Committee, Rabbi Neuman served as East Germany's first rabbi in 25 years. He held that position in East Berlin until 1988.

Rabbi Neuman has taught religious studies at Coe College and Cornell College in Iowa and at the University of Illinois, and lectured frequently at the University of Iowa. He has also lectured widely throughout the Midwest and Southeast on the topic of Holocaust studies. In 1986, President Reagan appointed Rabbi Neuman to a 5-year term on the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

Neuman has also been active in interfaith and civil rights activities, serving as president of both the Cedar Rapids Conference of Clergy and the Champaign-Urbana Ministerial Association. He participated in the 1965 civil rights march in Selma, Alabama with the late Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rabbi Neuman served 10 years as an auxiliary chaplain at Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul, Illinois. He was twice invited by the Secretary of the Air Force to conduct religious services overseas for U.S. servicemen.

Neuman has also written extensively. His articles and short stories have been published in the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Jewish Digest*, *Jewish Spectator*, *American Judaism*, *The Champaign-Urbana News-Gazette*, *The Cedar Rapids Gazette*, and the *Journal of Reform Judaism*. In 2000, Neuman with Michael Palencia-Roth wrote *The Narrow Bridge: Beyond the Holocaust*, the haunting, poignant story of his spiritual journey before, during, and after World War II.

Rabbi Neuman is married to Eva Grünstein Neuman, and currently resides in Champaign, Illinois. He has two sons, David Alexander, an

expert in the television and cable media industry, and A. Mark, a Washington-based government relations consultant and former U.S. Commerce Department official.

Brad Bloom, 1987–1995

Rabbi Brad Bloom served as the Senior Rabbi at B'nai Israel in Sacramento, California from 1995–2006. He is married to Linda, who is the Administrator for Art in Public Places for the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission. Their daughter, Leah, is in high school and currently serves as Religious and Cultural Vice-President of BICY.



Rabbi Bloom grew up in Baltimore and attended Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. He received his B.A. in history from the University of Wisconsin, and later received an M.S.W. at the University of Maryland. At that point, he decided that the rabbinate was his calling in life and so he entered the Hebrew Union College and received his rabbinic ordination in 1984.

Rabbi Bloom served as Associate Rabbi at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, California. In 1987, he assumed the pulpit of Sinai Temple in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois for 8 years. After 11 years in Sacramento, he became senior rabbi at Temple Shalom of Naples in Florida in 2006.

Rabbi Bloom has introduced many innovations over the years. Most important have been his mission of building community at B'nai Israel as well as bringing a deep understanding of *Tikkun Olam* for his congregants' inner and outer worlds. Rabbi Bloom believes that tradition is compatible with Reform Judaism when adapted into the cultural framework of

Reform Jewish life. Rabbi Bloom led his congregation through its darkest hour in June of 1999, when arsonists burned its temple and two other synagogues in one night. Bloom has led the way in advocating a proactive stance on hate crimes and dialogue with diverse religious groups.

Bloom is a gifted teacher, as demonstrated by his downtown Talmud classes, Kabbalah course, and book groups. Rabbi Bloom established Yachad, Sacramento's mid-week high school for Jewish youth. This program brings the teens in the community together for learning and socializing, and builds community for the future of Jewish life.

Rabbi Bloom has taught the Hebrew Bible courses at California State University at Sacramento and speaks to many groups from all over the community. His work in creating the Children of Abraham group, which brings clergy and congregants together from Muslim, Jewish, and Christian religions, has recently received the Louis Fain award from the Union of Reform Judaism Social Action Commission. Bloom is committed to *Tikkun Olam* for bringing diverse constituencies together in order to build the roots of mutual respect in our world.

Rabbi Bloom's devotion to touching souls in hospital visits and life-cycle events comprises the most significant component of his rabbinate. His belief is that the rabbi should be accessible to congregants in their time of need. His commitment to counseling has earned him the love and respect of his congregation.

Rabbi Bloom said, "The rabbinate is a calling to me. I love being there for congregants and knowing that I have made a difference in their lives. This is what ultimately brings me the most satisfaction in my life as a rabbi. Thanks to God for the spirit and energy that I receive each day to carry on my duties serving the Jewish people and teaching the eternal word of God."

Norman Mark Klein, 1995–Present

Norman Mark Klein, the rabbi of Sinai Temple since August 1, 1995, was ordained at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1985. He was rabbi of Temple Ohav Shalom, Allison Park, Pennsylvania, in the north hills of Pittsburgh from 1985 to 1991, and the rabbi of Temple Rodef Shalom, Waco, Texas, from 1991 to 1995.



Rabbi Klein came to the Rabbinic school with an interest in literature having done graduate work at Indiana University, Bloomington in the Ph.D. program of the English Department. His thesis work was on the subject of the interaction of character and place in contemporary novels set in exotic places. His Rabbinic thesis focused on a contemporary Israeli novel.

Under Rabbi Klein's tenure at Sinai Temple the congregation has instituted, among other things, Mitzvah Day—social action in the community, Mitzvot committees—acts of loving kindness within the community, a congregational trip to Israel, and a variety of minyanim so that there is now a service every Shabbat morning as well as Erev Shabbat.

Just elected as first vice-president of the Midwest Association of Reform Rabbis, Rabbi Klein is also active in the Chicago Association of Reform Rabbis, the Chicago Board of Rabbis, and the ecumenical organizations in Champaign-Urbana.

Andrea Klein, Ph.D., Rabbi Klein's wife, is a clinical psychologist, and they have two children, Samuel and Sarah.

**CORNERSTONE ESSAYS
FROM OUR COMMUNITY**



Photo by Ray Spooner.

**Death as a Beginning:
The First Jewish Organizations
in Champaign County, Illinois**

by Allen Avner



Photograph by Dori Gordon Walker.

The First Burial Society and Cemetery

In Champaign County, Illinois, as in many new American Jewish communities in the nineteenth century, the first Jewish organization was a burial society (*Chevra Kadisha*) rather than a congregation. The original minutes of that first Jewish organization in Champaign County survive as part of the American Jewish Archives at the



Photo by Dori Gordon Walker.

Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College.

The minutes, written by Solomon Bernstein, report that on October 6, 1867, "a number of the Israelites of Champaign and Urbana" met at the Champaign home of Max Eichberg and "resolved to form an association under the name of *Abavat Achim* or 'Brotherly Love.'" The threefold object of *Abavat Achim* was "first: to assist one another in cases of sickness; secondly: to acquire a piece of land for a burial ground, and to contribute equally for the payment of the purchase money and cost of fencing the same, and thirdly: to cooperate in cases of death in performing the Mosaic Ritual."

The list of names subscribing to this resolution includes the heads of many of the pioneer Jewish families of the community:

Herman Bacharach, Solomon Bernstein, Isaac Bing, Jonas Bing, Max Eichberg, Max M. Eppstein, R. M. Eppstein, Samuel Eppstein, Henry Hahn, L. Hart, S. Hart, M. Jericho, Joseph Kuhn, Morris Lowenstern, Daniel Schwarz, Henry Schwarz, Leopold Schwarz, Abraham Stern, and Nathan Stern.



The following is from the Cemetery Report. "The *matzevah* (memorial stone) is that of Philip Lowenstern. The stone dated 1871 was one of the first erected in Urbana in the first Jewish cemetery established in the Champaign-Urbana community. It was moved to Mount Hope cemetery around 1899 when all of the burials were transferred and the original Jewish cemetery was closed. According to his obituary, Philip Lowenstern was born on October 20, 1804 in Germany. He was living with his son, Morris, in Urbana when he died on June 13, 1871. The pitcher near the top of the *matzevah* indicates that Philip was a Levite." Photo courtesy of Allen Avner.



The Schiller monument includes three generations of women. Esther Meyer was probably the daughter of Meyer Meyer, and was the mother of Bettie and grandmother of Rose. All died within a few years of each other and in inverse order of their births. Photo courtesy of Allen Avner.

changes in the goals of the organization:

- (a) To assist each other in cases of sickness or death.
- (b) To buy an appropriate lot of ground for a burial place.
- (c) To erect, in the course of time, when it shall be decided necessary, a dead house on the said burial ground.

Membership was open to "Any Israelite... twenty one years of age & of good moral standing" who paid an initiation fee of five dollars and dues of one dollar per month. Members were subject to being expelled for conviction "of a criminal offence, or not observing the covenant of Abraham." Non-member "Israelites" were to have the right to bury a member of their family in the *Abavat Achim* cemetery on payment of the cost of digging the grave plus not less than ten dollars nor more than forty dollars.

The *Abavat Achim* minutes at the July 26, 1868 meeting reported success in buying "not quite an acre" of land from Saul Waters, "located in Waters grove about a mile north of Urbana," for \$200. This first Jewish

By the third meeting of the group, in early December 1867, a committee had produced a constitution and bylaws for *Abavat Achim*. Officers elected for one-year terms at that December meeting were Max Eichberg, President; L. Hart, Vice-President; S. Bernstein, Secretary; M. Lowenstern, Treasurer; and Joseph Kuhn, Representative. The constitution indicated some minor

cemetery in Champaign County was located at what is now the southeast corner of Cunningham Avenue and Perkins Road in Urbana. Across the road was the country mansion of Judge J. O. Cunningham, now the site of the Cunningham Children's Home.

On November 4, 1869, the bylaws were amended to reduce monthly membership dues from one dollar to 50 cents, and at the September 25, 1870 meeting a motion was passed approving the payment of \$187.75 for construction of a fence around the new cemetery.

The First Burial

One of the deficiencies of organizational minutes as a source of history is that they sometimes only hint at what must have been significant events for the organization. The first burial in the new cemetery, in August 1870, is reported in the September 1870 minutes only in the form of a motion "to send a bill (for \$10) to Mr. Kahn for the burial of his child." From her monument we know that Hattie Kahn died on August 1, 1870, at the age of one month and twenty-five days and was the daughter of Nathan and Hanna Kahn. A search of the 1870 census was necessary to discover that the Kahn family was from Mattoon. Hattie was days away from her death when her name was captured in the 1870 census for Mattoon on July 29, 1870. The census shows Nathan Kahn as a thirty-one-year-old merchant and both Nathan and Hanna as being born in the principality of Baden in what is now Germany.

Burial of Hattie in Champaign rather than Mattoon is an indication of the influence that the railroad had on the territory covered by a nineteenth-century rural Midwestern Jewish community. With the coming of the railroad to Champaign-Urbana in 1855, it became possible for residents of nearby towns to travel to Champaign by train in about the

same amount of time required to travel by horse and carriage across town. Hence we find the names of residents of towns with small Jewish populations, such as Farmer City, Mattoon, and Paxton, included as active members of many early Champaign-Urbana Jewish organizations.

Demographic and Cultural Factors

Examination of the 1870 federal census for Champaign County reveals that the majority of the founders of *Abavat Achim* were unmarried. Further, the Champaign-Urbana community contained no identifiable unmarried Jewish adult females. In a newly developing community where social services were meager, and in the absence of family, an organization such as *Abavat Achim* was probably seen as the only source of compassionate support for these men in case of sickness or death. Fraternal organizations served a similar purpose, so it is not surprising that the organizers of *Abavat Achim* were also instrumental in later organizing a local lodge of the international B'nai B'rith in April 1877.

By the time of the 1880 census, we can see a substantial change in the makeup of the Champaign-Urbana Jewish community. Though there were still unmarried males in the community, the majority of members of *Abavat Achim* had married and had begun families.

Tragically, these early families faced an infant mortality rate that was far above that seen today. Of the first forty persons buried in Jewish cemeteries in Champaign County, fourteen were under the age of thirteen. Those who survived into adulthood fared somewhat better, but their mortality rates were still sobering by the standards of today. The average age at death for the first forty burials in the Jewish Cemetery (1870 to 1915) was 36.7 years. The median age (the age at which equal numbers were older or younger) was 41. The average age at death for

the most recent forty burials in the Jewish Cemetery (1999 to early 2004) was 79.1 years, with a median age of 87. The oldest person in the early group was 87, the same age as the median (midpoint) age of the more recent group.

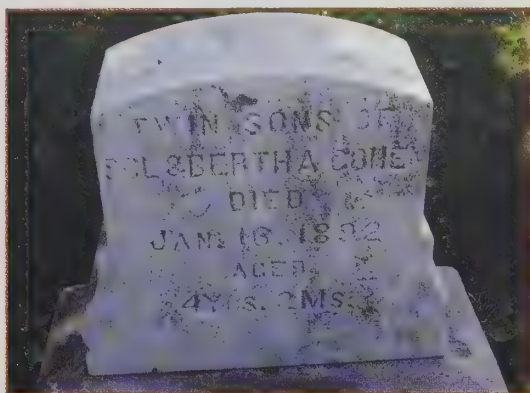
The First Change in Management

In March 1887, membership of *Abavat Achim* merged with the membership of Grand Prairie Lodge 281 of B'nai B'rith, and B'nai B'rith took over management of the Jewish Cemetery. B'nai B'rith was aided by fund-raising and maintenance efforts of the

Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society (from 1889 to about 1891) and the Jewish Ladies Social Circle (founded in 1894).

The Cemetery Moves and the Community Grows

In November 1898, the B'nai B'rith lodge proposed moving the Jewish Cemetery from its original location to a section within Mount Hope Cemetery in Champaign. Records of B'nai B'rith and the women's organizations do not give a reason for this move, though it was possibly related to the conversion in 1895 of the home of Judge J. O. Cunningham into an orphanage—the present-day Cunningham



The twin sons, Sim and Joe, of Solomon and Bertha Bing Cohen are an example of early childhood deaths and of a burial moved from the old cemetery. Sol Cohen was a brother of Nathan Cohen, and owned a general store in Arcola, Illinois. Photo courtesy of Allen Avner.

Children's Home. On March 14, 1899, twenty-one eight-plot lots were purchased by the B'nai B'rith lodge from Mount Hope for \$300. Mount Hope Cemetery records indicate that fifteen of the burials in this new section were reburials from the old cemetery in Urbana. After all were moved to Mount Hope, the old cemetery was closed. Since that time, the majority of Jewish burials in Champaign County have been in Mount Hope.

As the size and diversity of the Jewish community grew, the special Jewish sections of Mount Hope also grew and diversified. As new Jewish organizations became established within the community, operation of the Jewish cemetery became more of a cooperative activity. The major populations served have belonged to the Reform congregation of Sinai Temple (established in 1904 as the "Champaign-Urbana Hebrew Congregation"), the traditional congregation B'nai Israel (active from 1912 through 1954), and the University of Illinois Hillel Foundation (established in 1923).

From 1899 to the present, the area covered by the Jewish section of Mount Hope has been gradually expanded by purchase of additional land with the income earned from sales of burial rights. In June 2004, the Jewish section of Mount Hope Cemetery consisted of 786 burial spaces containing 346 interments. Purchase of an additional 96 spaces was in progress.

Burial and Ritual Practices

The bylaws of *Abavat Achim* specified procedures for burial that depart in some ways from current perceptions of appropriate Jewish practices. For example, the bylaws specified that, except in special circumstances, no burial was to take place before the expiration of forty-eight hours after death. Current Jewish practice is that burial should ideally be performed within twenty-four hours of death.

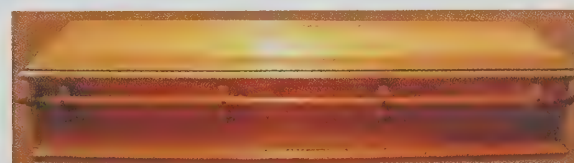
The *Abavat Achim* bylaws stated that all members were obligated to attend the funeral of a member or his wife. In the case of the death of a child, it was the duty of at least ten members to attend. Shiva services at the home of the mourners followed the German Reform practice of beginning on the day of burial and continuing for three days. All members were expected to attend these prayer services.

Mention of building a "dead house" at the cemetery suggests that the group planned to follow traditional Ashkenazic Jewish methods of preparation of the dead near the place of burial. Such a building was added to the first cemetery in the summer of 1871 (at a cost of \$128). Unfortunately, we have no record of what practices were actually followed by members of the society.



Photo by Dori Gordon-Walker.

The late-nineteenth century was a time when funeral and burial practices in all smaller American communities were undergoing change. Early-nineteenth-century Jewish burial practices were very similar to those used by the general population in rural America. The body was minimally prepared (usually in the home) by members of the family and buried almost immediately with a brief graveside religious service. Simple coffins were built at the time of need by local carpenters or cabinetmakers.



This is a modern-day version of an all-wood casket.

These practices began to change during the American Civil War, when techniques of embalming and use of mass-produced caskets became more widespread. Factory-made caskets were first added as a sideline to furniture stores. Later, some of these stores added embalming services to their coffin sideline and began the profession of "Funeral Undertaking." By the late-nineteenth century, the preparation of the dead for burial by family and friends was decreasing even in smaller rural communities, and what had begun as a sideline for furniture stores had emerged for some as a prime source of business. We read in *The Standard Atlas of Champaign County, Illinois* (George Ogle, Chicago, 1913) an advertisement for "Mittendorf & Kiler, Undertakers" (the present day Mittendorf-Calvert Funeral Homes) that lists "Furniture, Carpets, Pictures and Frames" as wares also available.

By 1887 the influence of the original members of *Abavat Achim* on funeral practices may have waned. The March 1887 merger of the organization with Grand Prairie Lodge 281 of B'nai B'rith certainly changed the focus of management of the cemetery. In addition, Max Eichberg, the founding president of *Achavat Achim* and probably one of the major forces behind its activities, was about to leave the community.

On July 27, 1890, the burial of Julius Bernstein, son of Solomon and Fanny, was handled by the undertaker Asbury Shuck. This burial was the first Jewish burial known to be handled by a commercial funeral director. Like the Mittendorf family business, Asbury Shuck began as a furniture dealer in Urbana sometime after 1870, expanded into funeral undertaking, and finally became a full-time funeral director in a building at the corner of Race and Green streets in Urbana. In May 1909 the Shuck Funeral Home was sold to Enos Renner, a partner of Renner Brothers

Livery and Stable business and a major supplier of rental horse-drawn hearses to the community. The business begun by Asbury Shuck and continued by Enos Renner exists today as Renner-Wikoff Chapel.

Examination of newspaper obituaries and the records of funeral directors indicate that a substantial number of Jewish funerals and burials in the early-twentieth century conformed more to the fashions of the time than to Jewish tradition. Elaborate coffins and burial vaults became more common, and there is little evidence that ritual preparation of the dead was being done on a regular basis until the revival of a local *Chevra Kadisha*.

In the late-twentieth century, the Champaign-Urbana Jewish community continued to explore the options provided by modern funeral practice. The Jewish cemetery contains many burials of cremated remains. Cremation is a practice permitted, with reluctance, by the Reform movement. Another innovation is the provision of space set aside in a mausoleum for entombment of those who choose that form of interment. One of the responsa (rabbinic judgments) found on pages 163-164 in Walter Jacob's book *Contemporary American Reform Responsa* (Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1987) is in response to a question raised by Sinai Temple's Rabbi Isaac Neuman on the propriety of using a mausoleum for interments. The judgment, dated December 1981, was that "There is nothing in Reform Judaism which would preclude burial in a mausoleum." Though this option remains open, only eleven members of the Champaign-Urbana Jewish community have chosen to use it.

In the early 1990s, a study group led by Lynn and Ira Wachtel under sponsorship of the Champaign-Urbana Hadassah chapter led to organization of a new *Chevra Kadisha* that is now a part of the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation. In addition to organizing the new *Chevra Kadisha*, the study group made a major contribution to the community

in the form of a guidebook (Lynn Wachtel and Alice Berkson, *A Guide to Death and Mourning Traditions*, Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, Champaign, IL, 1993 and 2000).

With establishment of the new *Chevra Kadisha*, Jewish funerals began a noticeable move back toward the ideals of simplicity in burial practice, even in cases where the services of the *Chevra Kadisha* itself were not used. Funeral homes in the community also became better acquainted with the range of Jewish funeral practices as a result of cooperative interaction with the *Chevra Kadisha*. Funeral directors provided working space for members of the *Chevra Kadisha* to perform *Tabara* (ritual washing and dressing of the body) and opened their buildings to the *Shomrim* (guardians), who watch over the deceased from the time of death to the time of burial.

The Champaign-Urbana Jewish Cemetery Today

Historically, the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Cemetery has been a community resource, created before any currently existing Jewish organization and maintained through the years by members of virtually every Jewish organization in the community. The Jewish sections of Mount Hope are currently managed by a committee appointed by the Board of Trustees of Sinai Temple, and Sinai Temple is now the legal owner of the cemetery land. However, it holds this land in stewardship for the entire Jewish community.

With the exception of the donations of the founding members of *Abavat Achim* and the groups that maintained it prior to implementation of endowed land care by the management of Mount Hope Cemetery, the cemetery has always been self-supporting. Income from sale of burial rights has been used solely to buy added space. The price

of burial rights has been set at the minimum required to buy replacement land and provide free space for indigent burials. Since Sinai Temple first took over stewardship of the cemetery, its bylaws have dictated that the cemetery funds be segregated from other Temple funds and accounted for separately.

Detailed documentation of Jewish burials at Mount Hope is available from printed reports of the Cemetery Committee (Allen Avner, Elaine Avner, and Tauby Shimkin, *Jewish Sections of Mount Hope Cemetery in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois*, Sinai Temple, Champaign IL, 1995 and 1999) and on the Internet through the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) at www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery/, where pictures of most of the monuments can be seen.

יִתְגַּדֵּל וַיִּתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעָלְמָא דִּי־רַבָּא
 בְּרֵעוּתָהּ, וַיִּמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן
 וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
 בְּעָנְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
 יֵהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא.
 יִתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח, וַיִּתְפָּאֵר וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא,
 וַיִּתְהַדָּר וַיִּתְעַלֶּה וַיִּתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקוֹדֶשׁא,
 בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעֵלָא מִן כָּל־בְּרַבָּתָא וְשִׁירָתָא,
 תְּשַׁבַּחֲתָא וְנִתְחַמַּתָּא דְּאִמִּירָן בְּעָלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
 יֵהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מְדֻשְׁמָיָא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ
 וְעַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
 עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
 וְעַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

The mourner's *Kaddish* (above) is a prayer proclaiming the greatness of God. It makes no mention of death, and must be recited only in the presence of a *Minyan*.

The History of Our Sisterhood

by Natalie Frankenberg,
Reva Egberman, and Susan Schomer

On March 8, 1889, a small group of Jewish women in Champaign-Urbana formed the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society. From 1897 to 1904, it was called the Ladies Social Circle. In 1911, it was renamed the Jewish Ladies Social Circle. Finally, in 1915, money was set aside to support a Sunday School. During the year 1917, a dues assessment of 10 cents per member per annum was paid to affiliate with the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. On June 22, 1917, the ladies voted to change the name of the Jewish Ladies Social Circle to Ladies of Sinai Congregation. At some point thereafter, we became known as Sinai Temple Sisterhood.

For the next seventy-seven years, the Sisterhood was an integral part of the entire life of the congregation. Our main focus was the support of the Religious School. To achieve that goal, we initiated many fund-raising activities: the Gift Shop; Stationery, Book, Bake, and Candy Sales; an Annual New and Next-to-New Sale; Scrip; and Friends of Sinai Temple Religious School, to name just a few. In addition, we supported many Temple and community activities—the Annual Seder, the Confirmation Class Trip, Oneg Shabbats, Meals on Wheels, Reading to the Blind, etc. We also established many funds, including the Alperin Stern Flower Fund, the Korry Confirmation Education Fund, and the Camp Scholarship Fund.

When the new Temple was completed in 1975, it was the Sisterhood who furnished all the appliances and continued to maintain and supply the new kitchen. From fall of 1994 to May of 1998, when the Sisterhood was unable to find new leaders, we functioned without a formal struc-

ture. During this period, we started some interest groups—a book club, an investment club, a cooking group, and a fitness group—some of which continue to this day.

On May 17, 1998, Sinai Temple Sisterhood officially dissolved. The monies from the Sisterhood Endowed Funds were turned over to the Temple. Monies were allocated to be used toward furnishings in the new Religious School addition and for the Youth Library. The Sinai Temple Sisterhood Camp Scholarship Fund was established with the majority of the money from the Sisterhood treasury. A Sinai Temple Sisterhood Endowment Fund was established to provide seed money in the event the Sisterhood reorganized within five years. On May 17, 2003, this

Endowment
Fund was dis-
solved, and the

money was deposited
into the Camp Scholar-
ship Fund.

A plaque, honoring
the women of Sinai
Temple Sisterhood, was
permanently installed
in the lobby of the
new addition.

This *Courier* newspaper clip-
ping from August of 1976 is
one of dozens of media
notices of the Sisterhood's
famous fund-raising event,
the Annual New and Next-
to-New Sale.

THE COURIER, Champaign-Urbana

Sunday, August 29, 1976



New and Next to New Sale Monday

Sinai Temple Sisterhood will hold its 22nd annual New and Next to New Sale from 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday at the Urbana Civic Center, 100 E. Water St., Urbana. Above, from left, Joan Levy, Sisterhood president; Buddi Tepper, food chairman for the

sale; Carol Mittelman, in charge of graphic arts for the sale, and Caren Rohr, a sale chairman, display some of the items to be featured. Local merchants have donated new merchandise and members of the organization have accumulated many next-to-new items

during the past year. Furniture, home furnishings, small appliances, a large jumbo mirror, a bicycle, a new camera, arts and crafts items, assorted housewares, plants, games and toys, books, clothing, curios, luggage and many miscellaneous items will be

for sale. Other sale chairmen not pictured are Mrs. Abraham Olefsky, Mrs. Ronald Schiff, Mrs. Paul Weichsel, Mrs. Myron Korry, Mrs. Renald Nelson, Mrs. Edwin Banks, Mrs. Chester Sless, Mrs. Arnold Barban and Jer-aldine Freed.

Sinai Temple Sisterhood Presidents

1920-1935	Ray Frank Litman (Mrs. Simon) Lida Wolf (Mrs. Charles) Florence Weingarten Annette Winakor (Mrs. Arthur) Amelia Reineberg (Mrs. Lee) Mrs. Morris Feist Rose Cohen (Mrs. Ray)
1937-1939	Helen Loeb (Mrs. Charles)
1939-1941	Rose Kuhn (Mrs. Isaac)
1945-1946	Ruth Youngerman (Mrs. William)
1947-1949	Helen Levin (Mrs. Ezra)
1949-1950	Carlyn Gottschalk (Mrs. Kurt)
1951-1953	Helen Wiese (Mrs. B. B.)
1953-1955	Merle Hamburg (Mrs. Joseph)
1955-1957	Lois Brodsky (Mrs. Jack)
1957-1959	Audrey Leavitt (Mrs. Arnold)
1959-1961	Lee Roland (Mrs. Charles)
1961-1963	Ruth Berkson (Mrs. Ralph)
1963-1965	Esther Steinberg (Mrs. Marvin)
1965-1966	Vera Korry (Mrs. Myron)
1966-1968	Helen Loeb (Mrs. Charles)
1968-1969	Donna Schiff (Mrs. Ronald)
1969-1971	Joyce Levy (Mrs. Ronald)
1971-1973	Vera Korry (Mrs. Myron)
1973-1975	Doris Krasnow (Mrs. Marvin)
1975-1977	Joan Levy (Mrs. Stan)
1977-1979	Annette Glaser (Mrs. Milton)
1979-1981	Susan Schomer (Mrs. Paul)
1981-1983	Buddi Tepper (Mrs. Michael)
1983-1985	Natalie Frankenberg (Mrs. Julian)
1985-1987	Carol Belber (Mrs. Carl)
1987-1989	Linda Siegel (Mrs. Martin)
1989-1991	Susan Schomer (Mrs. Paul)
1991-1994	Reva Egherman (Mrs. Bill)

The Traditional Minyan

by Alice Berkson

The Traditional Minyan is a source of pride for Sinai Temple. Even those who do not frequent the traditional Shabbat morning services or the traditional festival services or High Holy Day services point to these services as an expression of the diverse approaches to worship that are encouraged at Sinai Temple. A person attending for the first time on Shabbat morning would find an egalitarian service, conducted mostly in Hebrew from the Birnbaum *Siddur*. It is entirely led by a core group of Sinai Temple members, functioning with a familiarity and ease that reflects their commitment to the traditional approach to worship and their sense of *kavanah*. In addition to participating enthusiastically, those attending the services reinforce their sense of community with a kiddush luncheon following the service. Along with the traditional Shabbat services approximately twice a month, the Traditional Minyan holds High Holy Day services concurrently with the Reform service, as well as second-day Rosh Hashanah, festival, and yizkor services. Newcomers may not realize that the Traditional Minyan has functioned within Sinai Temple since the last quarter of the twentieth century and that many of the original members are still active in leading the minyan.

There was not originally a unanimous acceptance of the Traditional Minyan services although there was no objection to second-day Rosh Hashanah services held in the sanctuary when no Reform service took place. It was only after heated discussions in the late 1970s between minyan members and the Sinai Temple Board that approval was given for concurrent High Holy Day services. At first traditional services were



Lynn Wachtel (above left in the Davis Chapel) fostered the growth of leaders within the Traditional Minyan by holding a series of classes for members who then became leaders.

Since 1990, the calls for *teshuva* (repentance) have been blown on the shofar by Lee Melhado (above right). Photo by Ray Spooner.



At left, the Ark in the Davis Chapel is open to show the Torah used during Traditional Minyan services. Photo by Ray Spooner.

held during the day. Later, a traditional Kol Nidre service was added. A separate traditional Erev Rosh Hashanah service has never been held at Sinai Temple, and many look to this as the one time during the High Holy Days when the Congregation worships together at a single service.

After the orthodox congregation B'nai Israel ceased holding services in the mid-1950s, community members who preferred a traditional service could go to services at the Hillel Foundation on the University of Illinois campus. Although several Sinai Temple families have attended Hillel through the years, many felt that doing so was unsatisfactory, as they wished to worship in their preferred way within Sinai Temple. Paul Weichsel and Lynn Wachtel were among the primary leaders of traditional services at Sinai Temple beginning with second-day Rosh Hashanah services and Shabbat morning services in the mid-1970s. Originally at the request of the Sinai Temple Board, Arthur Robinson organized the yearly calendar of traditional services, and he has continued in the role of *gabbai*, lining up members to lead portions of the service, to chant Torah and Haftarah portions, and to prepare a *drash* for the morning Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. The process usually begins with a meeting in June attended by the Rabbi, Arthur Robinson, and several of those who take part in the services; dates for the services for the next Jewish year are then set. For many years, Esther Steinberg has assisted by sending e-mail reminders about the date of upcoming Traditional Minyan services.

Constant features of the services are including children in some way—pre-bar/bat mitzvah children are chosen to serve as Ark openers, and all present are encouraged to lead Ein Keloheinu near the end of Shabbat services—and a kiddush luncheon for all those attending the services. Barbara Friedberg took a leading role in organizing the luncheons for many years; now, Deborah Katz-Downie contacts participants to make sure a family or families provide the simple meal. Some families view the luncheon as an opportunity to celebrate a simcha such as a sig-

nificant birthday or anniversary, or the bar or bat mitzvah in one of the families who regularly attend the Traditional Minyan. In this way, the Traditional Minyan functions as an extended havurah that always welcomes new participants.

The Traditional Minyan relies on those who have extensive knowledge of the liturgy, such as Gary Porton, who is often called upon to read the Torah, and on others who arrived in Champaign-Urbana with a traditional orientation and excellent skill in serving as chazan, such as Gene Robinson, Richard Kaplan, and more recently, Bruce Rosenstock. Lynn Wachtel and Paul Weichsel also fostered the growth of leaders within the Traditional Minyan by holding a series of classes for members who then became leaders, such as Rosalind Weinberg. In the early years of the minyan, Richard Dinitz and others were among the leaders. Others who take an active role in reading and leading services are Jerome Kaufman and Elliot Weinberg, and High Holy Day services are enriched by the unmatched shofar blowing of Lee Melhado.

The tradition of having minyan members present a *drash* during the morning High Holy Day service was in part a necessity because, although the Rabbi could participate in the early stages of the service, he had to leave to conduct the Reform service. Minyan members sometimes comment on the Torah portion, but many take the opportunity to tell the personal story of their Jewish life journey. Hearing these autobiographical stories is often a highlight of the services, and it serves to increase the intimacy among all who attend.

The first traditional Shabbat minyan service at Sinai Temple may have been held on April 12, 1975, the same weekend as the dedication of the new Windsor Road building. Rabbi Isaac Neuman had found, upon his arrival in Champaign-Urbana the year before, that twenty to thirty families who preferred the traditional service attended Hillel on a regular basis, especially for High Holy Day services. Some members who had what



Lynn Wachtel, shown here slicing challah rolls in her kitchen, co-authored with Barbara Friedberg in 1978 a document petitioning Sinai's Board to allow a traditional service to be held simultaneously with the rest of the regular High Holy Day services. Concurrent traditional services were approved in 1980.

might be called a "Classic Reform" orientation thought that those who attended Hillel services should be more tolerant of the services at Sinai Temple. Those with a "traditional" approach to worship simply preferred the other style of worship. Two Sinai Temple members who were especially important in the process were University of Illinois faculty members Rubin Cohn and Marvin Steinberg, who had personal contacts among both groups and also understood both sides of the issue intellectually. Rabbi Neuman describes the formation of the Traditional Minyan as a process that took place over a period of time, with many meetings and discussions among Sinai Temple members. The specific details of the services and procedures were worked out at a meeting with Rabbi Neuman and several congregants at the home of Marvin and Esther Steinberg. One aspect of the services that was easily agreed upon was that services were to be completely egalitarian with no special honors given to Cohanim or Levites.

Paul Weichsel was among those who felt very strongly that Sinai Temple, as Champaign-Urbana's only community synagogue, should include a regular service for those who preferred the traditional service. He led the initial "conservative services" along with Lynn Wachtel in the mid- to late 1970s. With the success of the traditional Shabbat and second-day Rosh Hashanah services, members petitioned the Sinai Temple Board, in a memo dated February 1978, to hold a traditional service simultaneously with the rest of the High Holy Day services. The document, submitted by Lynn Wachtel and Barbara Friedberg, included the names of twenty-one individuals and families who had been polled in support of the idea. The document notes that Sinai Temple members who preferred the traditional service had been going to Hillel, which was not as satisfactory as holding services within Sinai Temple.

The 1978 memo to the Sinai Temple Board requesting simultaneous High Holy Day services for the Traditional Minyan states:

We feel that having the two services conducted simultaneously would be a unifying force in the community. We strive for a strong, unified Jewish community, where everyone can worship in a personally meaningful manner, while respecting the ritual life of others. A simultaneous traditional service would in no way affect the integrity, beauty, or attendance at the reform service. Rather it would accommodate those who choose a more conservative service at the High Holidays and who have for years been supportive Temple members.

A committee, chaired by Helen Levin, recommended to the Board that traditional High Holy Day services be held, but only those for daytime services, not Erev Rosh Hashanah or Kol Nidre. This proposal was approved at the May 1978 Board meeting. Members of the Traditional Minyan continued to press for the evening High Holy Day services, which resulted in another committee that examined the request two years later.

The intense discussions and outright, vocal opposition by some Sinai Temple members to concurrent traditional services were exam-

ined in 1980 by a Holiday Worship Committee, which was formed specifically to “air opinions and state positions on both sides of the question of whether Traditional High Holy Day Services at the Temple should be extended to Erev Rosh Hashanah and Kol Nidre.” This followed Sinai Temple Board’s rejection of a request in 1979 that evening traditional services be held. The committee dealt with several problems, such as overcrowding of the double kindergarten room used for the services, accommodating nonmembers who might wish to attend, traffic and parking logistics, and possible use of the sanctuary for both services by scheduling them sequentially. Included among the points was the possible need for an addition to Sinai Temple, with the estimate of \$150,000 or more for a room that could seat at least 150 and be used for additional purposes.

The section where the 1980 Holiday Worship Committee examined possible long-range problems reflected the dynamics of worship at Sinai Temple in that era and mirrored national trends. The report says that those who identify with the “Classical Reform” feel they have already given up a lot in changes to the regular services, and feel they are already accommodating Jews with a traditional orientation to worship. This reflected the view of some members that there was a definite shift following the adoption of the *Gates of Prayer* instead of the *Union Prayer Book* for Friday night services around the time the new Windsor Road synagogue was completed. The Worship Committee report voices the concern that some may want a “Classical Reform” service, especially if *Gates of Repentance* were to be adopted. Another point included was that as a Reform temple, Sinai should concentrate on Reform Judaism before broadening services, and that including traditional services would “dilute its functioning as a ‘purely’ Reform Temple.” There was concern about resulting power struggles over limited space, parking logistics, and that in the long term “encouraging the growth of traditional services



In this view of the Ark, the eternal light can be seen in the upper right. Artist Michael Gore of Chicago designed the ark and lecturn made of curly maple and fabricated in Chicago in 2000. The square designs represent the 12 tribes. His wife, Leslie Gore, hand painted the walls surrounding the ark. Michael Gore also blew the glass *ner tamid* in Murano, Italy. The hand-painted velvet *parochet*, or ark curtain, was also made in Italy. These items were generously donated by Howard and Freda Birnbaum, Ann Einhorn, David Neuman and Ehud and Janie Yairi. Photo by Ray Spooner.

may hasten the eventual fission into two congregations.” Despite these concerns, concurrent traditional services were approved in 1980.

The worst fears of those examining the multiplicity of worship services at Sinai Temple did not come about. Following the scheduling of traditional Kol Nidre services, the demand for separate traditional Erev Rosh Hashanah services has not been raised again. The entire Sinai Temple congregation gathers to celebrate Erev Rosh Hashanah, uniting all in worship. Far from fostering division, after three decades, members of the Traditional Minyan worship together within the greater Sinai Temple community. After about 20 years of enjoyable but less than spacious accommodations in the double Kindergarten religious school room, the Traditional Minyan now holds High Holy Day services with capacity crowds in the Davis Chapel. Many of the key players in the formation of the minyan and its successful functioning through the years are active, and the Traditional Minyan continues to flourish with new participants.

Acknowledgments

I appreciate the assistance of Rabbi Isaac Neuman, Arthur Robinson, Ira and Lynn Wachtel, and Paul Weichsel, all of whom agreed to be interviewed. Paul Weichsel also shared copies of documents relating to Traditional Minyan dealings with the Sinai Temple Board.

Teach Them Diligently: The Commitment of Sinai Temple Religious School

by Beri Schwitzer, Director of Education

For the perfect job description, just see the door. Outside the office of the Temple educator, Ira and Cecile Levenson cleverly inscribed a line from the Torah on the plaque that acknowledges their donation of the furnishings for the room: "And you shall teach them diligently to your children."

There have been several full-time educators at Sinai Temple since its beginning on April 2, 1905, but the role of teacher has fallen on the shoulders of countless volunteers and community members. Many of the community members were not full-time residents of Champaign-Urbana; rather, they were college students at the University of Illinois. Over the last 100 years, many teachers have touched the lives of Sinai



Professor Fred Gottheil (far left) and Andrea Klein (second from left) discuss the economy of Israel during the 2003-2004 confirmation class. Photo by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin.

Beri and Joel Schwitzer with twin daughters, Zoe and Mira.



Temple's children. Several of them have been so inspired by their experiences at Sinai Temple Religious School that they made Jewish education their profession.

Rabbi Daniel Rabishaw told the Sinai Temple Board at a summer 2004 leadership retreat that his life "greatly changed from teaching at Sinai Temple." A business major at the University of Illinois, he worked at the Religious School in the 1980s. Serving as fourth-grade teacher and later as youth group advisor, Rabishaw decided to follow in his family's footsteps and enter the rabbinate. Rabbi Rabishaw became the regional director for the Union for Reform Judaism Great Lakes Region on July 1, 2004. Rabbi Rabishaw moved from Memphis, Tennessee, where he had been Associate Rabbi at Temple Israel. The Great Lakes Region of the Union for Reform Judaism serves some sixty Reform congregations in northwest Indiana, northern and central Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota from its office based in Northbrook, Illinois.

Rolly S. Cohen, director of the Marshall Jewish Learning Center in Chicago, also began her prestigious career at Sinai Temple Religious School. From 1972 to 1975, Cohen taught third grade and music. Music

was a wonderful part of the religious school, Cohen recalls, and she was proud to “have started a little orchestra that would perform with all ages at special events like Sukkot.”

An education and fine arts major, Cohen said that working at Sinai Temple allowed her to combine her passions, and her first classroom teaching experience was a special one. She recalled an exceptional gift



Bryan Itzkowitz (music teacher 2002–2005) with the third-grade students in the sanctuary (picture taken during the 2004–2005 school year). In back can be seen the first Temple's windows. Photo by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin.

that her students presented to her that she still treasures: “I had my eye on a ring with the Ten Commandments on it that was for sale in the Temple gift shop. Somehow, a volunteer at the shop or someone in the Sisterhood knew that I loved it and told the parents of my class. Amazingly they purchased the ring and presented it to me as a class gift.” Telling the story, Cohen commented that it

brought back “fond memories of a warm and loving community.” The families, the students, and Rabbi Neuman all played a special role for Cohen, who has been working for the Board of Jewish Education for almost ten years. Cohen said that Sinai Temple “was a wonderful place to begin a career.”

Cohen has been part of the BJE/Supervisor Teacher program, mentoring beginning religious-school teachers in the Chicago area, and she is a graduate of the Florence Melton Adult Mini School and the Israel Seminar. Currently, Cohen is a Teacher Educator Institute Fellow with the Mandel Foundation. She attended the Whizen Institute for Family Education at the University of Judaism, Los Angeles, and has created many family education programs integrating Bible figures and the values they represent with music, art, and drama that she presents at Chicago area religious schools.

Cohen is not the only BJE employee to have been a part of Sinai Temple Religious School's staff. Linda Sonin, Creative Curriculum Consultant, worked for Sinai in the early 1980s. “I'm looking forward to giving back,” Sonin said as she prepared for her teacher-training seminar at Sinai Temple Religious School in January 2005. Sonin feels that she can relate to the majority of Sinai's current teaching staff, who are students just as she was. She will be demonstrating how to bring creativity to the Jewish classroom, a subject she is quite familiar with. Linda earned a Masters Degree in Jewish Education and Jewish Communal Service from Brandeis University. Over the past twenty-five years she has worked as an educational consultant, principal, and art educator in a variety of Jewish settings.

College students were essential to the beginnings of Sinai Temple Religious School. University of Illinois student Beulah Berolzheimer was one of the school's first teachers. Berolzheimer, who was also the first president of the local Ivrit Society, taught as a student and became the school's third superintendent in 1911. She was highly successful in budgeting and saw the school's first significant growth under her tenure. Prior to her appointment, enrollment had varied from five to twelve students. Under Berolzheimer, however, the school was able to break into three separate classes.

At the 100th anniversary Gala, long-time resident and past Temple president Arthur Lewis spoke of his many memories of Sinai Temple Religious School. His first memory, Lewis told the audience, was from 1920, when all seven classes were taught by college students. "I can see my mother and Mrs. [Hattie] Kaufman filling envelopes," Lewis said. "They were filling envelopes putting \$2.00 and two dimes in each.



Above: This view of the Temple's newly remodeled Youth Lounge, in memory of Adam Feinberg, was designed by Sharon Faier, an architect and member of the congregation. The gem of the room, the Sabbath mural, is part of a larger Creation theme, and was designed and painted by local artists Stephanie Fine and Gina Giannetti. *Photograph by Amy Weisbach.*

\$2.00 was for teaching the class and ten cents was for riding the street-car from the campus up Church Street to Champaign and back."

Hattie Kaufman and Bernice Lewis played a fundamental role in the Religious School's history. As members of the Jewish Ladies Social Circle (the predecessor to the Temple Sisterhood and descendant of the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society), Kaufman and Lewis were known for their dedication and love for the future generations of



Helee Hillman (teacher from 2002–2005) with her second-grade class. *Photo by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin.*

Champaign-Urbana's Jewish children. Prior to 1920, most of the Congregation and the Jewish Ladies Social Circle focused on other aspects of community life, such as saving money for the building, raising funds for an organ, maintaining the Jewish cemetery at Mt. Hope, and the keeping up a special room in Burnham Hospital. Thus, teaching and many of the administrative duties had to be done by unpaid townspeople, such as parents of the Sunday School children. Kaufman and Lewis sought a strictly Reform curriculum from the Hebrew Union College emphasizing the Bible and Jewish history. They recruited teachers from university students with knowledge of these subjects.

More details about the early days of the Religious School can be found in the article in Part I of this volume by Asa Rubenstein, who notes that "Hattie Kaufman was a respected teacher and superintendent for many years in spite of her limited knowledge of Judaism because she was devoted to the children; she delighted especially in alternating with Mrs. Lewis in leading them on the piano and in singing hymns and other songs." Arthur Lewis recalls these assemblies with

“grateful heart.” He remembers the total school, then with thirty to forty-five students, singing three songs and then listening to the inspiring words of Dr. Abram Sachar, teacher at Sinai Temple from February 1928 to the summer of 1947.

By 1927, Sunday School classes began at 9:30 A.M. and concluded at 10:45 A.M. so that the children and their parents could attend Sinai Temple’s services together at 11:00 A.M. During class time, the children would receive forty-five minutes or an hour of formal instruction followed by their assembly led by Dr. Sachar.

Dr. Sachar succeeded his close friend Rabbi Benjamin Frankel as the director of Hillel at the University of Illinois and eventually throughout the United States as Hillel expanded. During this time, Dr. Sachar



Julie Adelman teaching her eighth-grade class. Julie taught in the school from 2003–2005. Photo by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin.

instructed and gave these weekly assemblies. He managed to juggle all these duties for both Sinai Temple and Hillel and never accepted payment from the Congregation. Dr. Sachar is also nationally known for his second career: the first president of Brandeis University.

Arthur Lewis says that he remembers many of Dr. Sachar’s stories, but the one that was a “driving force” was a story about a ship that left Italy to go to Alexandria, Egypt. “Four men were talking on their ship,” Lewis recalls. “The first one said, ‘I can’t wait to get to Alexandria because I have beautiful oil paintings to sell.’ The second one described his beautiful silver art objects, and the third said, ‘I have gold to be purchased.’ The fourth man was a teacher. The next day, they saw the harbor of Alexandria. Everyone was excited. All of a sudden, the ship hit a rock and everyone jumped ship and swam to shore. The first man had no art, the second no silver, and the third had no gold. The teacher still had his education.”

“Dr. Sachar stressed that an education was the most important thing we could own,” Lewis said. Dr. Sachar also led worship services, and people from all around the area would come to listen. Lewis estimated that there were generally twenty to thirty congregants in attendance, but it didn’t take the High Holy Days to have the attendance jump drastically to 100 people or more. “Dr. Sachar would invite the Jewish sororities to be hostesses and escort everyone to their pews,” Lewis said. “Sometimes male students would come due to the sorority hostesses, who dressed impeccably in hats with beautiful brims and long gloves. That caused the overflow.”

As president, Lewis was responsible for a colossal change in Sinai Temple worship: changing services from Sunday afternoons to the traditional Friday night *Ma’ariv* service.

In the 1950s, a curriculum and structure shift occurred because of the increasing influence of university people from cities with large Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform populations and the merger of the previous Orthodox Conservative congregation in Champaign-Urbana. Before the 1950s, Sinai Temple members tried to make their children proud of their Jewishness by emphasizing the moral code that Judaism



represented. After 1950, this new outside influence caused the Congregation to place a heavier emphasis than before on helping its members and children cultivate their uniqueness as Jews. A gigantic change in the Religious School's curriculum was made so that children enrolled could learn Hebrew in the middle of the week. Sunday School was now devoted to the history of Zionism and Israel and some of the traditional forms of Jewish prayer and ritual, taught by a staff composed of both very knowledgeable Congregation members and university students, many of whom had studied in Israel.

The school grew from 69 students in 1954 to 140 students in the mid-1970s. One of Sinai Temple's graduates during that time was current teacher Rae Spooner. Spooner, a special education teacher for fifteen years at Jefferson Middle School, loves being around her students and shares their energy and love for learning. As *Ketah Aleph* teacher, Spooner serves as the first contact for our Hebrew school students and provides them the connection to the living language of the Jewish people. Spooner wants to give our students an even better education than she received and provides them with a creative and nurturing environment. She feels that studying in Israel made her value and appreciate her Judaism in a new way, and she hopes to pass that love for her identity and heritage on to her students.

Bernice Lewis had something in common with Rae Spooner. According to Arthur Lewis, his mother had one saying he will never forget: "It's fun to be Jewish!"

Spooner has volunteered her time not just as a teacher but as an active member of our Parent Teacher Association, Parents as Partners. Spooner is a regular in the kitchen, bringing her enthusiasm to Hanukkah latke making and Family Dinner Movie Nights.

At left, Rabbi Isaac Neuman blesses Shira Wachtel at her bat mitzvah. Photograph by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin.

In its 100-year history, Sinai Temple Religious School and its staff have expanded, but the dedication of the teachers, families, and students has remained constant. The school's early role, described by Rubenstein as "a social center, providing what was often the only opportunity for Jewish children in a Midwestern small-town environment to become acquainted with one another and to become aware of their beautiful religious heritage," continues to the present. Over time, our striving to fulfill that role has given community members and others, like the many college students who have worked at Sinai Temple, the opportunity to feel at home and to grow. Many have moved on, inspired by the commitment to education and Jewish identity that is felt within the halls of the Religious School, and some have stayed to make Judaism an exciting part of their students' lives.

It's a commitment that can be found in the hearts of the teachers, written in the Torah, and found on the door of the educator's office.



Beri Schwitzer meeting with Deborah Katz-Downie. Photo by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin.

The Educators

It's been said that it takes a village to raise a child, and in our 100 years, we've learned that it takes a community to run a religious school. The following people have held the position of educator in either a part-time or full-time capacity. We have also included some of the parents and community members who tirelessly volunteered their time and efforts to pass on Judaism to the children of Champaign, Urbana, Danville, and surrounding areas.

Beulah Berolzheimer, the third superintendent,
as it was called then, 1911-1915

Bernice Lewis and Hattie Kaufman, in the 1920s

Adele Libman, principal in the 1940s

Stanley Levy, early 1970s

Barry Marks, 1975-1977

Nancy Tepper, 1977-1988

Natalie Frankenberg, 1988-1989

* Eileen Wood, 1989-1991

Sharon Kaufman, 1991-1992

Cindy Mall, 1992-1995

Jill Singer, 1995-1996

Jenny Romalis, 1996-1998

Anne Schulman, half of 1998

Mazaal Zangvil, 1998-2000

Jean Deichman, 2000-2003

Beri Schwitzer, 2003-present

*First full-time director of religious education

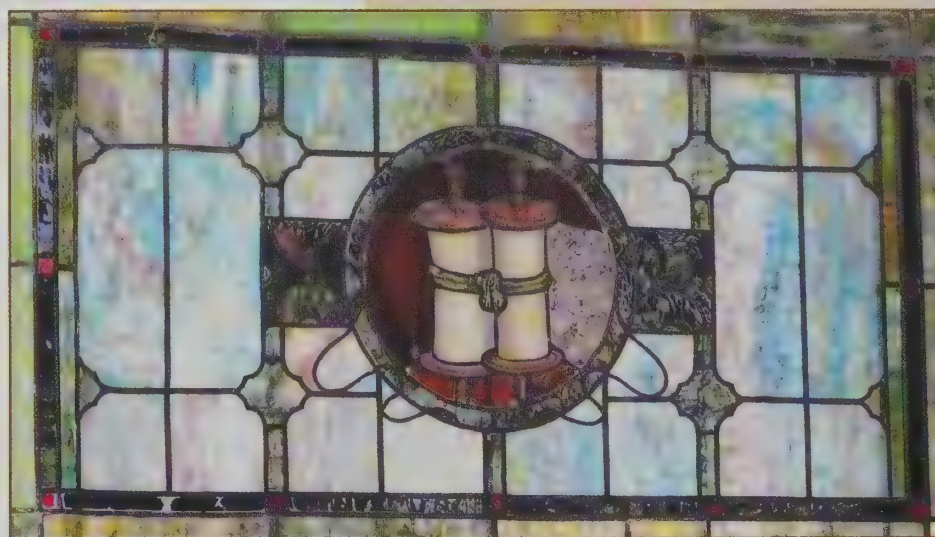


The Windows of Sinai Temple

by Joyce D. Meyer*

This was Sinai Temple in 1954 at 301 W. Clark in Champaign, and it's possible to see where the original stained-glass windows appeared on the old building. Some of the rectangular panes above the larger stained-glass windows were saved and moved to our current sanctuary. This 1954 photo, found at the Champaign County Archives, was taken by Dave Berry and

*The author thanks Allen Avner, Lynn Weisel Wachtel, Lisa Lane Libman, Beri Schwitzer, and Rabbi Norman Mark Klein for their kind assistance. Photos of stained-glass windows by Joyce D. Meyer.



Although it is difficult to ascertain from this 1954 photo at left, the limestone lintel above the front door bears the inscription "Sinai Temple." Along with many stained glass windows, it too was saved, and can now be seen in the lobby of the current Sinai Temple.

accompanied a late January/early February 1954 *News-Gazette* article by Bob Sonderskov describing Sinai Temple's fiftieth anniversary celebrations. Apparently these windows were in place when the original building was completed in 1918.

Also in the Champaign County Archives was the article by Asa Rubenstein that appears in this book. It named the Temple architect, George E. Ramey, but the window artist is not known. A task for a future history detective will be to find the name of the artist and some early records that indicate why these particular designs were chosen. Supposedly, the artist's name would be in some record of the architect's, but this material has yet to surface.

According to Lynn Weisel Wachtel, "In the old Temple, they were actually the windows. I grew up with them in that context, until the fire.... The windows were on each side of the sanctuary. It was my understanding that after the fire, any window that could be rescued,

was, and they were then used in the new building" (personal communication, June 15, 2004).

A June 1975 *News-Gazette* clip covering the completion of the new Temple on Windsor Road echoes this: "Several of the stained-glass windows from the old sanctuary have been built into one wall of the sanctuary as



a memorial, highlighted by floor-to-ceiling windows." This was in an article called "Sinai Temple: A Bold New Design Finds Harmony with the Beauty of Tradition." No author's name appears. Basically, there are five designs plus a plain pane.

The six-pointed star is the *Magen David*, the

star of David, also known as the "Jewish star." Its recent use as a symbol of Judaism dates at least to medieval times. It was used by Theodore Herzl and the rise of the Zionist movement just over 100 years ago; thus, it is appropriate that this symbol would have been included in the new Sinai Temple built in 1918 by Champaign-Urbana's Reform Jewish congregation, which had been established in 1904. The scrolls of course represent our sacred Torah. The *menorah*, meanwhile, has long been a symbol of Judaism. Represented is the traditional *menorah*, which holds seven candles, as opposed to the Hanukkah *menorah*, which holds eight plus the *shammas*, the candle used to light the others.

By far the most interesting, especially to visitors, is the representation of the eye. Who knows what this represents? Could it be the eye of



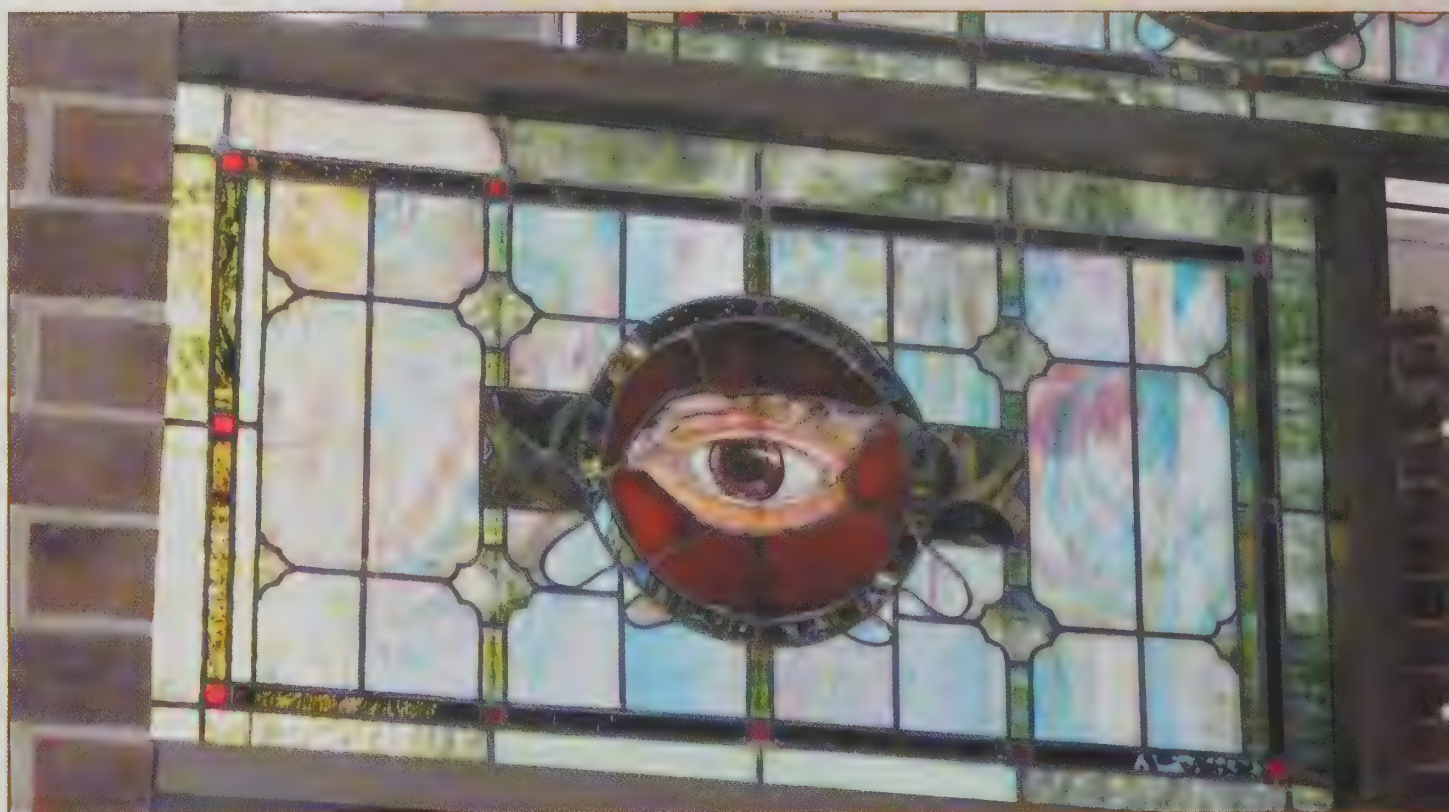
G-d? Possibly. More traditional Jews probably would not have a human representation of the Holy One, but this was the epitome of a Reform temple built for a Reform congregation at the time. The building is similar to other houses of worship built in that era, and likewise the eye is a common symbol in Judaism, often appearing in the middle of a *hamsa*, or hand symbol, which is common in jewelry. At any rate, these Reform congregants, having a more modern orientation, may have had no problem at all with the use of human imagery to represent the Almighty, but just what it represents is far from clear.

What is more clear is its apparent use to fend off the *ayin bara*, or evil eye.

According to Rabbi Norman Mark Klein, current rabbi of Sinai Temple, the eye could simply be a symbol of wisdom, a “metaphor for G-d’s light,” or a representation not meant to stand for G-d but to “give humans understanding on the level that humans can understand, even when G-d is described as *not* human” (personal communication, October 5, 2004).

The lion of Judah is the last of the five distinct symbols. It is also a very common symbol in Judaism and, as Rabbi Klein says, adorns many a Hanukkah menorah. According to Rabbi Klein, it may actually be there to represent all of the ten lost tribes of Israel. As the rabbi points out, the tribe of Judah remained after the conquest of the Jews by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.E., and this symbol, the lion, then came to be connected to Judah Maccabee who later rescued the ancient Jewish Temple from desecration through the miracle of Hanukkah—hence its association with the *hanukkiyah*, the Hanukkah nine-candle type of menorah.

All in all, it has to be said, these windows provide this community with much aesthetic enjoyment. In addition, they continue to pass on a wonderful legacy from the past generations to the future generations here in the Jewish community of Champaign-Urbana.



Lesbian and Gay Jews at Sinai Temple

by Lisa Busjahn

As Jews, we honor a tradition of affirming human rights through social activism. This tradition has been engraved in our hearts by the loving and courageous acts of our greatest heroes. Among all the great deeds Moses did, perhaps the one that most typifies his commitment to us as a People was his intervention on our behalf after we made the Golden Calf at Sinai and G-d was ready to destroy all the Israelites. Wherever we turn in our history, we find men and women devoted to the Jewish imperative of seeing the face of G-d in all. As we study the deeds of Emma Goldman, Rose Schneiderman, Golda Meir, Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, Harvey Milk, Evelyn Torton Beck, Harvey Fierstein, and Rabbi Steven Greenberg, among many others, we affirm them as our role models in repairing the world.¹

At times, of course, our struggles focus on how we treat each other as Jews as well as how we interact with those outside our community. After a long and contentious debate that spanned years of study and tore at the lifelines of many individuals and families, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) in 1990 voted to admit openly gay and lesbian people to the rabbinate. A brief description from the CCAR of acts building to this decision follows:

The Reform Movement has been an advocate of gay and lesbian rights since 1965, when the Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) passed a resolution calling for the decriminalization of homosexuality. In 1977, the UAHC and the CCAR passed their first resolutions dealing with this issue, calling for human rights for homosexuals. Since then, the UAHC, CCAR, WRJ, CSA, and NFTY have passed resolutions dealing with issues specific to Reform Judaism, such as inclusion of gays and lesbians in the rabbinate and cantorate, as well as national issues, such as support for civil marriage, elimination of discrimination within the Armed Forces and the Boy Scouts, and support for explicit workplace non-discrimination and civil rights legislation.

A Measure of Community

Jews across the nation responded variously to this landmark decision. Our community reflected the breadth of these responses. A letter from a Temple member published in the Spring 1991 issue of *Reform Judaism* reflected one perspective:

Dear Editor:

Can a homosexual rabbi serve as a role model? Absolutely not!

A role model is someone you would like your children to be like. What parent in their right minds would want their child to be homosexual?

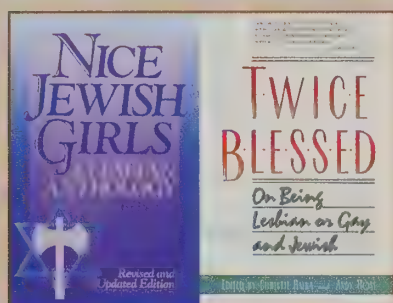
Gays and lesbians may well be "a fact of Jewish life today," but that doesn't mean we should like or accept it.

Reform Judaism is getting way off base when it asks us to seriously consider accepting homosexual rabbis.

Citing Torah, Rabbi Brad Bloom expressed views of a similar tenor prior to introducing two lesbians, Lisa Busjahn and Joyce Meyer, and a gay male couple at a Sunday at Sinai forum. Joyce Meyer, quoting interpretations conflicting with Rabbi Bloom's, drew from the books *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology*, edited by Evelyn Torton Beck, and *Twice*

Blessed: On Being Lesbian and Gay and Jewish, edited by Christie Balka and Andy Rose. The following is from a review of those two books by Alishia Fishman, American University, published by H-Judaic:

Nice Jewish Girls and *Twice Blessed* examine the incorporation of Jewish identity into lesbian and gay communities, as well as the incorporation of homosexual identity into the Jewish community. The theme of community, central to both works, is explored in the sub-themes of diversity, invisibility, and reconciliation, topics that the contributors to these books believe are significant for understanding Jewish and lesbian/gay identity.



The writer of the essay you are now reading experienced the audience's attitudes toward the lesbian and gay couples at this discussion as positive. After one panel member observed that

lesbian daughters should expect as much support from their families and communities if they were called dykes as they would if they were called kikes, the audience applauded. In general the audience response to the Rabbi's message was much cooler and at times blatantly negative.

Here it is important to note one of the more important results of Jewish study and discourse: minds and hearts are changed. After many private conversations with a Temple member, who remains closeted in his identity, Rabbi Bloom changed his mind about the roles of homosexuals within Judaism and now serves a Temple in California that specifically sought a rabbi willing to marry same-sex couples. Prior to leaving Champaign, Rabbi Bloom went on record in the November 17, 1992 edition of *The Daily Illini*, stating that "sexual orientation should not be a disqualification for the clergy," and during the same interview he suggested that time spent on trying to keep women and gays out of the clergy should be



Demonstration at a Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgendered Rights Rally in Madison, Wisconsin, 1991. Photo courtesy of Joyce D. Meyer.

spent on more important issues such as adultery and child molestation.

Even as we struggled with questions about gay and lesbian Jewish religious marriage versus civil union ceremonies, our leaders are clear about those rights in the civil realm. In 1993, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) resolved to

oppose state and local statutes restricting the civil rights of gays, lesbians, or bisexuals, and to call upon governments to adopt legislation affording committed lesbian and gay partners spousal benefits; ensuring that lesbians and gay men are not adjudged unfit to raise children; and affording partners the means of legally acknowledging their relationships.

Rabbi Norman Klein, who followed Rabbi Bloom, also found himself adjusting to the various opinions offered by the congregation on the rights of Jewish gays and lesbians. When he was asked if Sinai Temple would be a cosponsor of an appearance at Hillel of a Jewish lesbian author, a congregant advised against the new rabbi's making such a move. The same congregant, at the time the president of the Hillel Board of Directors, later called the author of this essay to suggest a compromise: the Temple could cosponsor the event *if* Hillel did not include the sexual identity of the author in advertising headlines and instead saved

that information for the text of the flyers. Burying the author's identity was not acceptable. After discussion with several other community members and subsequent reflection, Rabbi Klein decided the Temple would cosponsor the event without stipulations.

Rabbi Klein also recognized the grief of lesbians and gays and the sorrow of the nation when Matthew Shepard, a gay student at the University of Wyoming, was brutalized and left to die on a fence outside of Laramie in October 1998. The Rabbi spoke with great feeling and eloquence during Friday-night services about the horror of hate crimes against gays and all people, truly leading the congregation in mourning the senseless loss of an innocent young man.

Role Models

In 2004, at a Sunday at Sinai Forum, Rabbi Emeritus Isaac Neuman, recalled changes that had occurred in Reform Judaism over the 40 years of his life as a rabbi. He noted that homosexuality was considered wrong until very recently. He then pointed out Joyce Meyer, Chair of the Champaign-Urbana Holocaust Education Committee, and Lisa Busjahn, a Committee member, as being active and accepted

members of the local Jewish community.

Of course, lesbians and gays have held leadership positions at the Temple and in the Jewish community throughout its history. With changes in current interpretations of our laws and more liberal attitudes, it



Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgendered Rights Rally in Madison, Wisconsin, in front of the Wisconsin State Capitol building, 1991. Photo courtesy of Joyce D. Meyer.

would be tempting to say that lesbian and gay Jews feel comfortable in this local community. However, reports from closeted members of the congregation indicate that homophobic remarks and jokes are still traded among some congregants when they think no one of a different mindset is around.

At this writing, almost all lesbian and gay members of the local Jewish community chose not to identify themselves or their relationships as lesbian or gay for this history. Privacy was one reason cited. Loss of friends and change in employment status are among others. One person interviewed said that too many people would be shocked and have a different opinion of him. Another said that if her employer should discover this identity, there might be ramifications in her professional life. Still another declared that heterosexuals do not have to identify themselves and so she did not feel it necessary either. These responses, although understandable, make documenting lesbian and gay contributions to Sinai's history regrettably difficult.

At this writing, it still takes a strong self-concept to be out as a gay or lesbian in the Sinai community and most places in America. This is especially unfortunate, as lesbian and gay children need role models. Many studies demonstrate that teens who identify as gay or lesbian—including those who are still uncertain about their sexual identities—have higher rates of suicide than the general adolescent population. This is one reason inclusion of lesbian and gay history in this Temple document is critical.

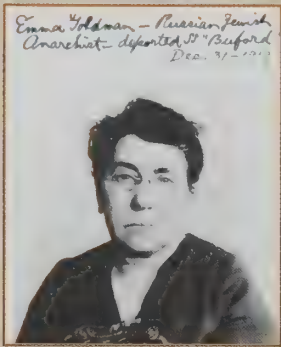
So to date, the struggle to be treated as fully dimensional human beings continues nationally and in our own community. The following, written by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick, a University of Illinois Hillel rabbi during the early and mid-1990s and now an openly gay rabbi and educator, appeared in the April 30, 2004 edition of South Florida's *Express Gay News*, "Gay people are constantly bombarded with images of idealized

heterosexual romance. There are still virtually no honest portrayals of loving gay couples in the mainstream media."

One of the Temple's more active members and an excellent role model for gays and lesbians, both children and adults, and for all in the congregation, is Dan Smith, who believes the time will come when almost all Jews are accepting of gay and lesbian religious leaders.

Mr. Smith said, "It is with this hope in mind that I choose to be out. If people don't see us [lesbians and gays] as we make contributions to the life of our community, they will cling to the false and malicious stereotypes that society, even our own Jewish culture, often presents to them."

As we remember our Jewish heroes, including those who are lesbian and gay, let us model their courage to work toward an understanding of, and respect for, the complex diversity of all human beings. Remember that we are a community. We all stand together to recite Kaddish. We dance together at Simchat Torah. We gather to celebrate the creation of Israel and to grieve on Yom HaShoah. We are all too fully beautiful and integral to our community to be denied any aspect of its life.



Notes

1. A few examples of social activism by these notable Jewish personalities.

Emma Goldman, born in Lithuania in 1869, moved to the United States, where she became an anarchist activist and organizer, lecturer and agitator, feminist, and an advocate for workers' rights, birth control, and free speech.

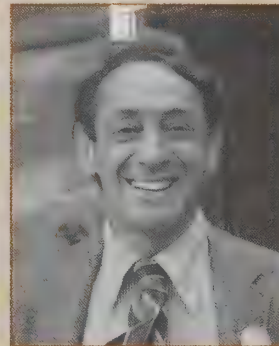
Born in Poland in 1882, **Rose Schneiderman** moved to the United States, where she devoted most of her time to the Women's Trade Union League. After the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, she helped establish the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and led its 1913 strike. Determined to outlaw sweatshop labor, she told New Yorkers, "I would be



a traitor to those poor burned bodies if I came here to talk good fellowship Every year thousands of us are maimed. The life of men and women is so cheap and property is so sacred."

Golda Meir was elected to Israel's first parliament and served as Israeli Foreign Minister, Minister of Labor, Ambassador to Moscow, and as its fourth Prime Minister.

In 1962 **Michael Schwerner** married **Rita Levant**, and a year later they joined the Congress on Racial Equity (CORE). They worked with **Andrew Goodman** and **James Chaney** as CORE field-workers in Meridian, Mississippi. Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney



were shot to death on a rural road and were hidden in an earthen dam by the Ku Klux Klan.

Harvey Milk was the first openly gay man elected to any substantial political office in America's history. Thousands of astounded people wrote to him. "I thank God," wrote a 68-year-old lesbian, "I have lived long enough to see my kind emerge from the shadows and join the human race." Sputtered another writer: "Maybe, just maybe, some of the more hostile in the district may take some potshots at you—we hope!!!" Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone were shot to death on November 27, 1978. The confessed killer was a troubled anti-gay fellow County Supervisor by the name of Daniel White. White was sentenced to only five years and parole when his lawyers argued that White's depression had been exacerbated by eating too much junk food.

Evelyn Torton Beck edited *Nice Jewish Girls*, an anthology of Jewish lesbian writings about sexuality and Judaism, in 1982.



Harvey Fierstein is an award-winning playwright, actor, and gay rights activist. In 1983, he won the Best Play Tony award for *Torch Song Trilogy* and the Outstanding Actor award for his star performance in that play.

Rabbi Steven Greenberg is the first openly gay Orthodox rabbi. He was featured in the 2001 film *Trembling Before G-d* and is the author of *Wrestling with God and Men*, among many other works about Judaism.

Building the Addition: 1997-1999

by Michael Shapiro

Probably in 1994, during the time I was vice-president, it became clear that the K-PreK classroom would no longer hold all those who attended Sinai's traditional High Holy

Day services. For a couple of years, the room had been filled to capacity so that chairs had to be set up in the parking lot. There was no larger available space in the Temple itself, and the leaders of the service objected to the idea of a tent pitched on the grass, which would also have taken up needed parking spaces. What to do?

At the same time, the Religious School had been on double sessions for a while, mostly because there were not enough classrooms or other usable teaching spaces in the building. What to do?

One answer to both problems was to add more space to Sinai. Len Heumann, president of Sinai, raised the problem with the Board, and it was decided to seek an architecture firm for a preliminary study of the



Rabbi Klein and Gary Porton led the groundbreaking ceremony for the Temple's addition which attracted dozens of congregants and observers ready to don hard hats.

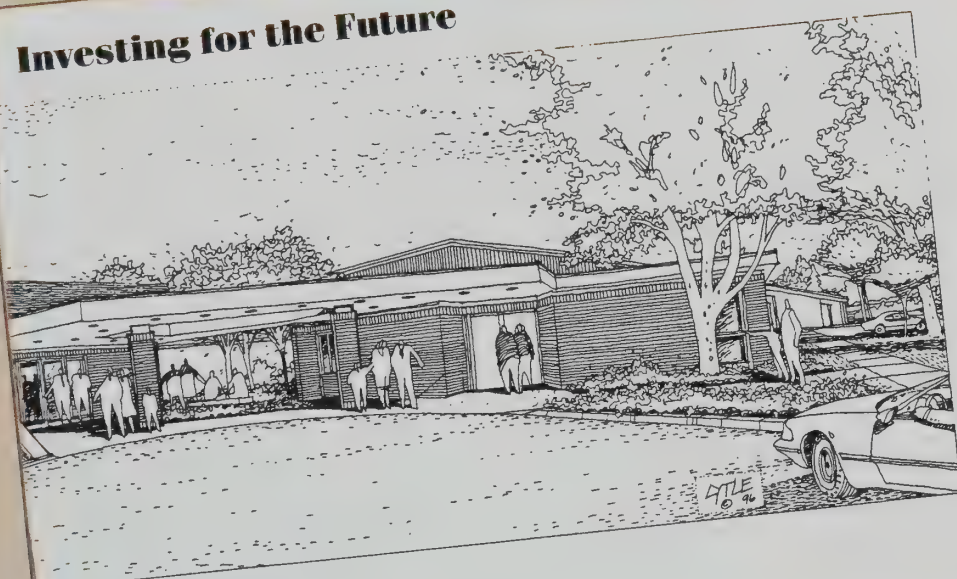
situation. Len wrote to six local firms and three responded with interest. One, Gary Olsen and Associates, had done additions to several churches in the area, and he invited the Board to join him on a tour of three of them. The Board was impressed with the way he had integrated new and old space, with his solutions to various problems, and with the fact that he was warmly welcomed back to each church, so it commissioned him to do the preliminary survey, and eventually to design the entire addition.

By then I had become president. I realized that we needed to get to work on fund-raising if ever the addition were to be built, and to that

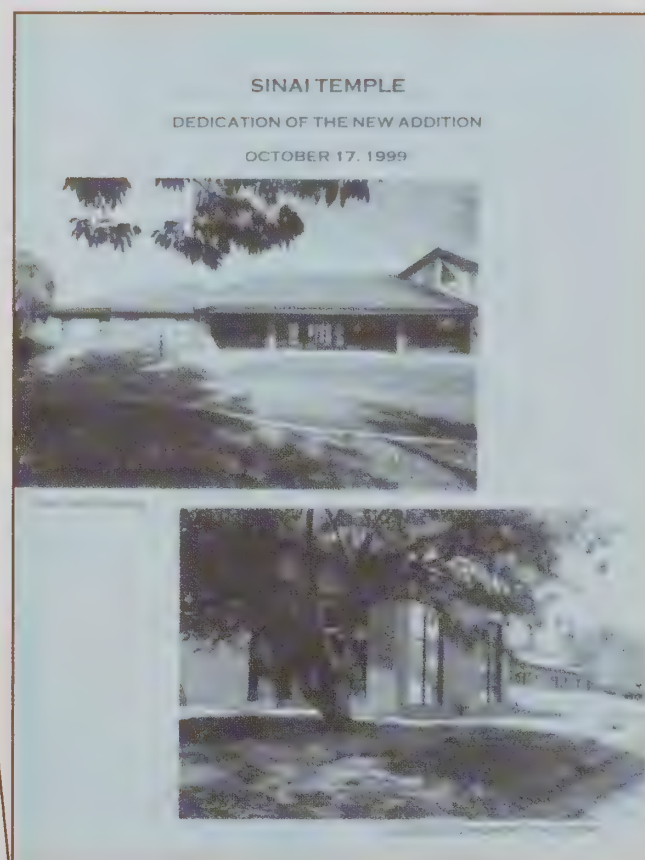
end I began talking with Judy Kaufman, a professional fund-raiser and Temple member, who was willing to design and oversee the campaign. She expected to be paid but would donate her salary back to the Temple, and together with her husband, Jerry, an early advocate of the project, she would also make a generous pledge to the campaign.

I then appointed two parallel committees: one to work with Gary Olsen on the planning of the extension, the other with Judy on the capital campaign. The Architectural Committee was chaired by Len Heumann and Harvey Choldin, with Wiley Deckard becoming co-chair during the actual construction, when he was at the site virtually every day. The Campaign Committee was chaired by Helen Levin and Jerry Kaufman, with Mark Stolkin as the first campaign treasurer and Joan Friedman as his successor. At a general meeting of the Congregation, the members voted to approve both Olsen's design and the plans for the

Investing for the Future



NEW WEST ENTRY
SINAI TEMPLE ADDITION
CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS



campaign. The Architectural Committee then surveyed the Congregation, held a series of open meetings where members could look at possible designs and offer their comments, and generated ten separate subcommittees to deal with specific aspects of the project. Between the open meetings and the subcommit-

tees, a large number of congregants were directly involved in the planning of the building.

The Board also played a crucial role. It carefully monitored the selection of the architect, the campaign professional staff, and later the contractor, Felmley-Dickerson. When the architect's design came in with a price tag of \$1.6 million, the Board passed a binding resolution that we would scale back the project if we could not raise that amount. In other words, we would spend no more on the addition than we raised in the campaign. The Board members were generous in their initial pledges, and when a need later developed for additional funds, they stepped forward in the same spirit of leadership.



Meanwhile, the Campaign Committee met with Judy Kaufman to determine what sum we could realistically expect to raise, and concluded that \$1 million was about the most that could be had. A “silent” campaign was then launched so that major gifts could be lined up before the official opening of the campaign. A lead gift of \$150,000 by Leonard Davis primed the pump, and other major donors soon came on board. The official opening, chaired by Lisa Libman and Janie Yairi, involved a catered buffet dinner and a performance of *HMS Sinai*, written by Janie Yairi and Carol Mizrahi, a parody of *HMS Pinafore* by Gilbert and Sullivan (renamed Ginsberg and Solomon for the occasion), and was a smashing success. Moreover, as the “silent” campaign had by then yielded more than \$900,000, the Campaign Committee decided to raise the target to \$1.25 million, then to \$1.6, and eventually to \$1.7. Many volunteers agreed to visit other members, first making their own pledges, and in fact well over 90 percent of the membership pledged to the campaign.

The campaign was structured so that members could pay their pledges over a three-year period, or longer in some cases, but because we hoped to begin the project right away, and because the bills had to be paid as the construction work was done, we needed to secure a bridge loan, which in turn generated service charges that had to be met by a five-year assessment. This point was not made clearly enough at the special congregational meeting, and some members assumed that the interest charges on the bridge loan would be paid out of the pledges. However, the Board voted to use the income from pledges only for construction and related costs and not for servicing the bridge loan, so that Sinai could build the kind of extension that would provide what the members desired, what the Temple needed, and what would last well

Behind every great man—even a rabbi—there’s a strong woman digging in to help. Second from left, Andrea Klein, Rabbi Klein’s wife, adds her muscle to the groundbreaking.



into the future. In the end, the Board permitted anyone who felt misled to reduce their pledge accordingly, but very few took that option.

The Architectural Committee and subcommittees worked at fine-tuning details of the architect's plan and worked with the contractor and subcontractors on the myriad decisions that had to be made. By the end of my tenure as president, we had accomplished a major goal: we had an attractive and workable design for the extension, and with the money pledged, the bridge loan, and the five-year assessment, we had a sound plan to pay for the project, leaving the Congregation with only a relatively small unpaid balance, which in turn was linked to one or two trusts that guaranteed the eventual liquidation of this debt.

At this point, my tenure of office was over, and I passed the gavel to my successor, Gary Porton, on whose watch the actual construction

Above: The new wing of Sinai Temple, completed in 1999, shows the west entrance most often used by the Religious School. It also provides direct access to the offices and the rabbi's study. *Photo by Benjamin Halpern.*

began during the following fall. By late in the next summer, the addition was complete, though not fully furnished. Money that had been set aside for internal furnishings had been used to offset unforeseen construction costs, which meant that new funds had to be raised. Lisa Libman led the fund-raising for and the acquisition of internal furnishings. The building addition was dedicated on October 17, 1999, the culmination of a vision brought to reality through the hard work of those already mentioned and by a great many other Temple members.

M'vakshe Derekh: Seekers of the Way

by Elizabeth Klein Shapiro

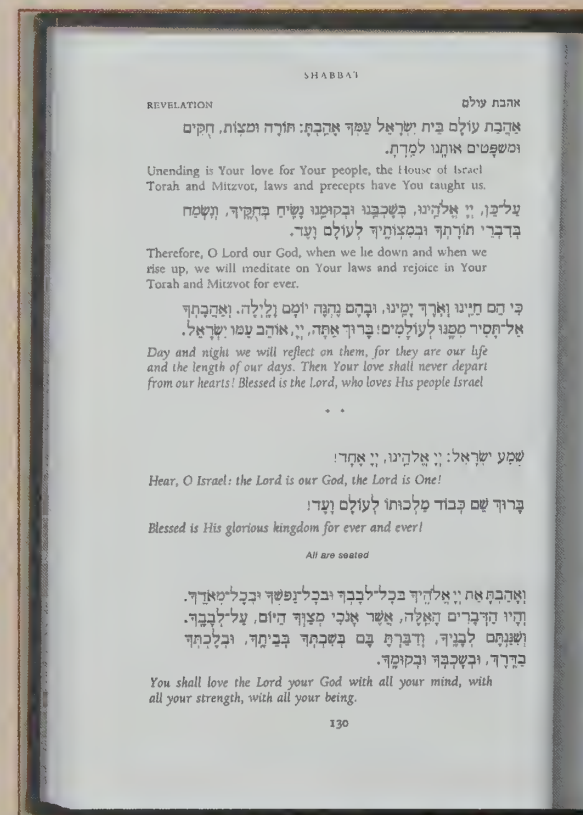
During the first year Rabbi Brad Bloom served as rabbi of Sinai Temple, he proposed that an experimental Reform Minyan be set up to meet one Saturday morning a month just as the Traditional Minyan had for some time. Lay-led and largely in English, the experimental nature of this service evolved over time. At its peak, it began with a discussion of a subject the leaders felt significant, either because of the Torah portion or because of concerns related to the Congregation's spiritual life. Before the service itself began, there was often a set of breathing and meditative exercises, or *Ruach*, intended to prepare worshippers for prayer. *Gates of Prayer*, the Reform prayer book, was used as a model for setting up a service that usually included the morning blessings and then readings of contemporary poetry or other appropriate material to enhance the sections of the service: Creation, Revelation, and Redemption. After silent prayer and meditation, a portion of the Torah was read with blessings in Hebrew, but the Torah text was generally read in English. This was followed by a second discussion. A blessing was offered for the sick. Concluding prayers were from *Gates of Prayer* and the service concluded with

kaddish. Like most Saturday morning services, it was followed by a potluck *kiddush* luncheon.

The organizers of this service could not rely on the prayer book alone and were lucky to have the advice and encouragement of both Rabbi Bloom and Rabbi Klein as well as Rabbi Emeritus Neuman. Although none of the rabbis led these services, one or more were always present and often helped to focus the discussions that made up more than half the service.

Because preparing the services required a commitment of time on the part of the leaders, toward the end of 2003 this service no longer attracted a steady participatory membership. Moreover, with the introduction of the Torah Minyan, a service largely sung in Hebrew but including a discussion of the Torah portion, *M'vakshe Derekh* came to an end. At this writing, a new English-language service has just begun. Though less experimental than *M'vakshe Derekh*, it attracts people who find a service largely in English more comfortable and spiritually uplifting.

One part of the Shabbat service, as it appears here in the *Gates of Prayer*, is the Revelation section.



The Havurah Movement

by Elizabeth Klein Shapiro

At the end of the 1980s, Sinai Temple had grown larger, and many members felt there was a less intimate, less friendly quality than what they had known in earlier years. To help restore the sense of belonging and allow people to get to know one another well, there was a move to establish *havurot*, or small fellowship groups, within the Congregation. It was hoped that families and single individuals would be able to share Shabbat dinners and holiday celebrations and, in other ways, be able to feel they had an extended Jewish family within the Congregation. Elizabeth Klein Shapiro and Leslie Marsh Mason were selected by President Stan Levy to head a committee to determine how these “families” might be organized.

At our request, the regional office of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in Chicago sent down Mimi Dunitz to advise and encourage this movement. One Sunday afternoon, about one hundred prospective *havurah* members turned up to hear Mimi Dunitz describe the benefits of a *havurah* and the way in which each group might determine its own pattern. We learned that it was common to have a regular meeting time (about once a month), that potlucks were generally a part of the meeting, and that groups could be intergenerational or made up of people at the same stage of life. This would mean that families with children more or less the same ages would be well placed together. A questionnaire to determine what each prospective member was looking for was passed out, and then the committee met to put together groups that would have a good chance of thriving. The program began with seven groups, some of which survive to this day, more than fifteen years later.



Just before Thanksgiving in 2002, this *havurah* met for an evening of fellowship at the Dessen home. Standing, from left: Ed Dessen, Ehud Yairi, Natalie Frankenberg, Loretta Dessen, Marianna Choldin, Joli Ginsberg, and Don Ginsberg. Seated, from left: Anne Martel, Janie Yairi on stool, and Harvey Choldin.

Since their inception, *havurot* have continued to be a part of life at Sinai. New members are asked if they wish to be a part of a *havurah*, and if they do, an effort is made to find an appropriate group for them. Many children have grown up knowing other families whose members feel like aunts, uncles, and cousins with whom they have shared celebrations. Adults have had the pleasure of shared *simchas* and support during times of sorrow. The *havurot* have helped to make Jewish life in Champaign-Urbana truly the life of a community.

Synagogue 2000

by Elizabeth Klein Shapiro,
S2K Process Facilitator

In the spring of 2000, at Rabbi Klein's suggestion, the Congregation applied to become a cohort in the Synagogue 2000, or S2K, program. S2K, sponsored by both the Reform and Conservative movements intended to encourage congregations to aspire to a goal represented by the acronym PISGAH, meaning "summit" in Hebrew, through Prayer, Institutional change, Study, Good deeds, Ambience of welcoming, and Healing. The goal was to help transform "synagogues into communities of meaning, spirituality and connectedness." Synagogues all over the country were invited to apply, and Sinai Temple was fortunate to be chosen as one of the cohorts.

A team of about twenty congregants was formed. Some members of the team were able to attend several national conferences, where they met other cohorts and were introduced to a range of experimental services, liturgical music, and new ways of becoming a welcoming, sacred community. In addition, our efforts were overseen from the start by Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman, director of the Department of Religious Living of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, now known as the Union for Reform Judaism. The team met to study the text *Prayer: Itinerary for Change*, provided by Synagogue 2000, An Institute for the Synagogue of the Twenty-First Century, which modeled what we were

later to learn was the pattern for a Jewish Journey Group: sharing a meal, having an opening ritual, "checking in" as each member spoke briefly about matters of personal significance, studying an assigned part of the text with different leaders, and closing with a ritual, usually a prayer or reading.

The result of this work over two years was considerable. The Congregation for some time had had two Saturday services a month: the Traditional Minyan and *M'vakshe Derekh*, or experimental minyan service—as well as scheduled Reform bar and bat mitzvah services. There was strong feeling on the part of the team that we needed to have a morning service every Saturday, and the Torah Study Minyan, now known as the Torah Minyan, was born. It uses the draft of *Mishkan Tefillah*, the new CCAR siddur, as its prayerbook.

Friday night services changed as well. The rabbi introduced a *niggun*, or wordless melody setting a spiritual tone, sung at the beginning of the service, longer periods for silent prayer, and a moment for people to share news of happy events with the Congregation. During the *kaddish*, mourners were asked to stand in the order of the time of their observance (*shiva*, seven days; *sheloshim*, first month; *yud bet bodashim*, twelve months or first-year anniversary of burial; *yahrzeit*, of death thereafter) before the Congregation as a whole stood to recite the prayer.

One of the great problems we still faced was how to find music that would best serve our spiritual needs at Friday night services. The organ has been almost entirely replaced by the piano as accompaniment for both choir and congregational singing. The Temple Music Committee was reestablished and chaired by Linda Weiner and Cecile Lebenson. In order to encourage more participatory singing by members of the Congregation, a group of singers known as the Shabbat Singers was formed. Not a formal choir, this group (under the leadership of Allison



...a Torah was passed through the Congregation. Many members, especially those who had never before touched a Torah, found this experience extremely moving...

Above: Abra Wright holds the newly completed Torah on March 6, 2005. Every year at the start of the Reform *Kol Nidre* service, a Torah is passed through the Congregation. Photo by Ray Spooner.

Fromm Entrekin) has been taught the settings to most prayers. Their presence has helped to swell congregational singing.

At the start of the Reform *Kol Nidre* service after S2K's first year and since, a Torah was passed through the Congregation. Many members, especially those who had never before touched a Torah, found this experience extremely moving, as was watching what one member has described as "a

Torah wave." In addition, congregants in the Reform service were given the opportunity to light candles placed around the sanctuary.

Although the first team concluded its work in the spring of 2003, a second team with only a few of the original members was formed to continue studies from the second text provided by Synagogue 2000, called *Sacred Community*. This team is, at this writing, working on a number of projects: preparing an introductory brochure for visitors and new members, organizing an entirely English service, and developing strategies to make greeting of newcomers a regular part of our congregational life. In addition this team is taking a look at the "signage" in the building to make suggestions for changes that would make Sinai Temple a more comfortable place in which to find one's way. The team is also examining ways to make younger families and intermarried families feel more welcome.

Synagogue 2000 continues to enrich our congregational life.



Although not the usual Sinai musical fare, the Maxwell Street Klezmer Band from Chicago performed their brand of Jewish music for the congregation's enjoyment. (circa 2003)

A vibrant, abstract painting by Marc Chagall titled 'Entry to Jerusalem' (1969). The painting depicts a large, diverse crowd of people in various poses and colors, suggesting a festive or significant event. The style is characteristic of Chagall's work, with bold outlines and a rich, warm color palette dominated by yellows, oranges, and reds. The figures are stylized and expressive, with some appearing to be dancing or celebrating. The overall composition is dynamic and celebratory, capturing a sense of collective joy and movement. The painting is set against a light, textured background that allows the figures to stand out.

Part II

*Our Jewish Identity:
An Anthropological
Perspective*

Marc Chagall's *Entry to Jerusalem* (1969), a copy of which is displayed at Sinai Temple.

Jewish Voices

by Edward M. Bruner

At the first meeting of the committee to write the 100th year history of Sinai Temple in Champaign, Illinois, I looked around the room and recognized four professional historians from the University of Illinois. I asked myself what could I, a secular cultural anthropologist, contribute? Fortunately, our chair, Blair Kling, came to the rescue. He asked each of the committee members to select a topic of interest and to write a short piece; he said that then he would put it all together in a final report.

I chose to write about Jewish identity, so central to many decisions made by the Board of Trustees, the Temple officers, the rabbi, and the membership—for example, organ music (too Christian), more services in Hebrew (too Jewish), the place of the Traditional Minyan, support for Israel, and the Religious School curriculum. Seemingly parochial issues large and small that arise within the congregation are often decided based upon a conception of Jewish identity, including beliefs about what it means to be a Jew and about appropriate Jewish practice. Thus, Jewish identity as it has changed over the past 100 years of Sinai Temple's existence is fundamental to understanding the history of the congregation.

The challenge, however, is methodological—how best to study Jewish identity. One could do a survey questionnaire, but from an ethnographic perspective the results tend to be too schematic and superficial. To ask someone directly—what is your identity?—didn't seem promising. My methodology was to elicit personal narratives from Jews in Champaign-Urbana about what the Jewish community means to them and what it means to be a Jew, and about how they express their Judaism. This is an

area people can readily talk about, especially as I asked them to frame their stories in terms of their own

background and life experience. An individual's sense of Jewish identity emerges from these narratives. The small sample suffers from not being representative, but it does provide more depth.

The problem of selecting a sample was daunting. Given my subject position as a retired professor in his seventies, I decided just to gather stories from my friends and acquaintances, all of

whom were at least seventy years of age. Obviously the stories presented here do not represent the larger Jewish community, as they are derived from one historical cohort, who grew up in the 1930s and lived through the virulent anti-Semitism of that era, the Holocaust, World War II, the birth of Israel, the postwar expansion, the civil rights movement, and the late 1960s changes in American ideas about ethnicity, to the contemporary period. The narratives tell the story of one generation. Someone else could extend the project by interviewing a wider and younger sample. I should warn the reader in advance that the personal narratives gathered here when taken together may seem discordant, even chaotic, but possibly this is a reflection of the complexity and varied ways of being Jewish in the American Diaspora as we enter the twenty-first century. I note that I viewed this project as an opportunity to continue my lifelong dialogue with myself about what being Jewish means to me.

When I began interviewing, my thought was that "the Jewish community" was like the Holy Roman Empire, in that each word was prob-

**...this is a reflection
of the complexity
and varied ways of
being Jewish in the
American Diaspora**



Purim revelers from the 1960s: from left to right, Henry Blum, Brenda Nagel, Steven Gluskoter, Alan Gluskoter. Photo from Sinai Temple archives.

lematic. "The" implies a singularity, but there is no single such entity. There are multiple ways of being Jewish, and the term "community" has no single meaning. Some refer to a community of place, to the people who live in a specific locality, such as a village or neighborhood. This usually

implies face-to-face relations, homogeneity, and shared values and traditions. Others think of community as those who are members of an organization, for example, the University of Illinois academic community. In this sense, there could be many different communities within one locality. The term *community* may be used in the even broader non-local sense of "the academic community," to refer to a worldwide community of scholars. Benedict Anderson writes about nations as "imagined communities," because the members will "never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them." Some speak of the Jewish community in the sense of peoplehood, implying common ancestry and identity, as the continuity of a bloodline, or simply shared values and culture.

In addition to these dictionary definitions, there is another definition of the Jewish community presented on the Website of the C-U Jewish Federation. The words "Gateway to the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Community" are centrally located on the site, surrounded by the logos of four pillars of that community: Sinai Temple, The Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, Hillel Foundation, and The Program for the Study of Jewish Culture and Society at the University of Illinois. This is an institu-

tional definition of community. One view expressed strongly during my interviews, especially by those who were "leaders" of the local Jewish community, was that a Jew is a member of the Jewish community to the extent that he or she participates in one or another of these organizational structures. To identify oneself as Jewish is not enough: they demand active participation in Jewish organizations. It is not just what you feel but what you do.

Beyond the institutional structures, my data suggest that many people feel stronger attachments to smaller rather than to larger Jewish organizations— to the Traditional Minyan, a Jewish book club, a Torah study group, an investment group, or a havurah, for example. The Traditional Minyan is a religiously conservative group whose members worship together within the reform Sinai Temple, socialize outside of services, celebrate life-cycle events together, and go to great lengths to care for one another. It epitomizes what the French sociologist Durkheim defined as religion, as it combines the sacred and the social. There are so many of these smaller interest and activity groups in Champaign-Urbana that I could not enumerate them all. Some are not formally organized and have no name; they consist of a network of Jews who have become friends or share a common interest. Such networks or a particular temple committee, activity, or study group may become a primary point of Jewish identification.

A former president of Sinai Temple emphasized that membership in the Jewish community requires action. About the smaller Jewish groups, he said that five Jews playing basketball are not thereby members of the Jewish community. The informal groups are fine, but they have to integrate with the larger Jewish organizations. He historicized the matter. In the 1950s Americans expected everyone to have a religious affiliation, so Jews joined a temple as a way to assimilate and be accepted in American society. Anti-Semitism was everywhere, was taken for granted, and was

part of the national culture. By the late 1960s everything had changed. Black was beautiful, Jews became more accepted, ethnicity could be expressed, and being different became good. It was safe to be Jewish. Intermarriage had cachet because it was a sign that you had made it in America. Younger people now can't tell the difference between Jews and Christians, and they speak of the Judeo-Christian tradition. They have grown up totally integrated. The president asked, What does mainstream America know about Jews these days? The Holocaust, which is taught in schools, and the demonizing of Jews because of Israeli actions. He bases this observation on what he hears from his college students, who have little education about Jewish continuity. He is very concerned about it.

The rabbi wants people to join a "community of worshipers" at the Temple, but it is good if a person "feels" Jewish, and to have a sense of Jewish identity is even better. He recognizes that affiliation varies by stages in the life cycle in that young adults tend not to join the Temple until they have children. From the rabbi's perspective, however, some people have a wrong-headed idea of the Jewish community in that they assume it is always going to be there, they take it for granted, and they never think of what it takes to survive. The Jewish community is a process; people must do something about it and actively work to construct and maintain it.

The varied understandings of community may overlap. My aim here is not to provide dictionary definitions but to take an ethnographic approach to Jews in Champaign-Urbana in order to determine what Jewish identity and the Jewish community means to them. Anthropology defines words by the context within which they are used, and by people's own explanations of their words and their associated experiences. Anthropologists know that spoken words may diverge from action and practice. You can't tell for sure what a person will do from what he says, and you can't tell what a person believes from what he does. There is

no absolute correspondence. Someone might say that he is a complete atheist with no religious beliefs yet be a fully practicing member of the Sinai Congregation. As the person who gathered these data, I was not judgmental in that for me there was no one correct or approved position. Although I have my own views, I tried to listen carefully to others and to accurately report the stories told. I came to realize that the project I set for myself was far larger than I could complete in any reasonable period of time, and I became increasingly aware of the complexity and multilayered subtlety of the topic. I did not fully understand this complexity when I started, and I am humbled by the research experience. I present what I learned in the short time available to me. I begin with people's own statements, as gathered by direct interviews using a tape recorder and by telephone conversations, and I use both first- and third-person tellings. Individuals are identified by initials, mostly pseudonyms except for those who requested that their real initials be used. The storytellers recognize that many in the community will know who they are, and all those interviewed gave their permission to have their narratives included.

To frame these stories, I provide information from a survey of the Jewish population in Champaign-Urbana conducted in 2002.

- There were 662 Jewish households
- 48% were age 50 or over
- The mean household size was 2
- Over 40% had lived in town for 30 or more years
- 86% reported that they were Jewish
- About two-thirds of the population belong to Sinai Temple
- About one-half made contributions to the Jewish Federation
- About one-third had attended Friday services
- 58% had been to Israel
- About one-half felt anti-Semitism was still a serious problem in the United States
- Almost 95% felt being Jewish was very or somewhat important to them

The Stories

RF

After he completed his doctorate at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana in 1952, RF's husband was offered a faculty position. The couple asked themselves if they could raise a Jewish child in these cities. RF's parents, immigrants from Russia, were educated not only in Russian but also in Yiddish and Hebrew. They had seen to it that RF attended Hebrew school to get a Jewish education. "This is what I grew up with." Her husband had not only attended Hebrew school but had also studied privately with a rabbi. Jewish tradition "was important to us, it was part of our lives, and you just don't throw this away." An active Jewish community was essential to them. They needed a place to worship, a religious school, and an opportunity to meet and socialize with other Jews.

In 1952 Sinai Temple, a reform congregation, had been in existence for some 48 years. Services were held every Friday night but were almost entirely in English, whereas RF was accustomed to mostly Hebrew. Temple members were mainly merchants and professional people. There were few Jewish faculty at the university, and fewer still were members of the Temple. The Sinai Sisterhood held regular monthly luncheon meetings, and also arranged some social events.

As there was already an established synagogue, a full-time rabbi for the first time (Bernard Martin), and a religious school here, RF and her husband decided to stay in Champaign-Urbana and to participate actively in Sinai Temple. For three years RF taught in the religious school, which then had about sixty students. Her husband subsequently taught confirmation class for ten years. When Rabbi Martin was away on military leave, rabbinical students from Hebrew Union College

served on weekends. When they could not be here, RF's husband conducted services.

At that time, shortly after World War II, the university was expanding rapidly. Many incoming faculty and staff were Jewish and sought out the Temple. There was little opportunity to become acquainted with other young Jewish couples who were moving into Champaign-Urbana, so with the help of a few others RF started a Couples Club. They met once a month at the Temple for fun, games, lectures, skits, and other pleasant activities. RF and her husband made close friends within the Couples Club. The group continued for four to five years. As more activities became part of the congregation as a whole, the need for the Couples Club ceased to exist.

RF and her husband became so involved in Sinai Temple that she ultimately became president of the Sisterhood and her husband became president of the congregation. During the last fifty years the congregation has grown in size and changed in composition. Now (2004) about three-quarters of the members are academics; the religious school has grown to approximately 200 students; and bar and bat mitzvahs, which were rare fifty years ago, are now common.

RF's Jewish identity is unproblematic. There is continuity from her grandparents to her children, and an unwavering sense of her commitment to Judaism and to participation in Jewish institutions. Through her active involvement, RF feels that she and her husband contributed to the flourishing of a strong Jewish community in Champaign-Urbana. She is thrilled by the high level of activity at the Temple and by its growth over the years.

FK

FK came to Champaign-Urbana late in life (when she was "old") to be with her son the rabbi and his family. She joined the Temple and goes

to Friday night services. For her, however, to be a member of the Jewish community one need only be Jewish—that is, accept that one is a member of a people with a history that is worth remembering. Judaism, she feels, is not just a religion but a peoplehood, a way of thinking, a sense of humor, and particularly it is about persons who have empathy for others. Institutional affiliation and religious practice are not essential, nor is it necessary to pray or go to services. She calls herself a “committed Jew,” and “naturally” wants to be part of the Jewish people. She says, “I couldn’t be anything but Jewish.” In her words, “I always thought of myself as Jewish but never thought of myself as a praying Jew.” Being Jewish is important to her; it is “a deep part of my psyche.” She has a good sense of humor. Her most serious complaint about Champaign-Urbana is that “there is no good deli here.” She is not particularly “religious,” even though her husband was from an orthodox family. Judaism might be more intelligible to her, she reports, if there were not so much Hebrew, which she does not understand.

Her home on the East Coast was in a Jewish neighborhood, and they would go to Friday services, but for her it was a social and Jewish event, not a religious one. The temple was important to them, but so were other things in life. Her grandparents were from Russia, and her mother was born in Boston and married there. Her father’s family migrated from Latvia to Ireland, and he went to a Catholic school, although her mother was an observant Jew and kept a kosher household. Her family went to the temple mostly on the High Holy Days. She had no systematic religious education and attended Religious School only briefly.

Politics were and are significant to FK. She and her family were all left wing, and while growing up in the 1930s, she considered joining the Communist Party, although she did not join. Some contemporaries joined the Lincoln Brigade in the 1930s and fought fascism in Spain. Her closest friends in high school were not Jewish, although half of the girls

in the school were Jewish. Later on in life, however, most of her friends were Jewish, and religion is becoming more meaningful to her.

There may seem to be inconsistencies in FK’s account, such as how could her mother keep a kosher household yet not send her to Religious School, and how could she turn out to be so secular in her beliefs, but such paradoxes are widely shared and are part of the larger Jewish experience in America. I pointed out to her that despite her lack of commitment to the Jewish religion, her son became a rabbi. I asked, “How come?” Her reply was that her son always enjoyed activities at the temple and felt comfortable there, from an early age. He majored in sociology in college, worked toward a PhD, but found his calling as a rabbi. She is proud of him.

AS

AS’s father was an active socialist, and she had never entered a synagogue or attended a Jewish religious service until she met her future husband, MS, who was an orthodox Jew. Many of her parents’ friends were Jewish, and it was important to the parents that their children knew they were Jewish, but the emphasis in their family was socialism, to make the world better, to help others. Her parents did go to temple on the important Jewish holidays but did not practice Judaism at home. Her father’s family came from Vilna and her mother was from New York. After AS’s mar-

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riage, she and her husband went at first to a conservative synagogue, and initially it was difficult for her. But as she says, "Judaism became important to me because it was important to my husband," and she felt strongly that she wanted to construct a "cohesive" family. Both physicians, they lived on the West Coast in a small community with few Jewish people. In the local high school there were only three Jewish students.

With two lawyers and a businessman from their town, AS and MS started a new Reform temple, which has subsequently become the largest temple in the San Fernando Valley, with 1,200 families. They were active as a family in developing the temple, and proud of its growth. They belonged to a havurah that was important in their lives, as it was a caring group. For AS, a havurah is or should be like an extended family. When they left California and moved to Champaign-Urbana, they joined Sinai Temple as well as a havurah here. Of their three children, one married a Jew, one a non-Jew, and one never married.

PW

"In order to describe how my wife and I defined ourselves in this town with regard to the Jewish community, I have to go back a little bit to discuss what we were before we came here. We came here in 1960, I had just finished my PhD at Cal Tech, and this was my first job.

"I had grown up in what I would describe as a proletarian Jewish home. Neither of my parents was highly educated in Judaism or in other matters. They were both immigrants. My mother came from a rather 'hoity-toity' family in eastern Poland. Her father was the head of a yeshiva and also did many other things; he was a timber merchant and hard liquor merchant, to make a living as best he could. She had an exalted sense of her status in society. They were very badly hit by the first World War, and she was sent away at the age of 16 to live in Vienna by herself.

"She lived in a residence like a YWCA-YMCA, a place where the ravages of war produced a lot of young people who were wandering in Europe, and they could live in a relatively safe environment. She worked as a babysitter and did various things, and she imbibed the whole Vienna scene and learned about opera and Western music. About 1918-1919 she came to this country. My father came from a very proletarian background also in eastern Poland, and began his life here as a sewing-machine operator in suits and coats in the garment district in New York.

"They met and married in New York. My mother lived her life with thoughts of her father over her left shoulder, and made the kind of kosher home her father would have approved of. They thought of sending me to a yeshiva but instead sent me to a cheder, a storefront religious school

taught by immigrant rabbis. There, we translated the Tanakh, the Torah portion, the first five books of Moses, from Hebrew to Yiddish. The lingua franca of the cheder and also of my home was Yiddish. My parents spoke to us in both Yiddish and English.

"My mother was an avid assimilationist, and as they said at the time, she wanted to become 'a real Yankee.' Before she was married, she went to night school to improve her English even while she was working, and she wanted her kids to be as assimilated as possible. But religious education was a given, so I went to cheder four days a week,

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and to services every Friday night. It was discovered at a very early age that I had a 'voice,' so I was taught to conduct services, or in other words I learned to daven. At about the age of eleven I conducted services, learned to read Torah, so that when I had a bar mitzvah it was duck soup although it was also hard work. The aim in reading Torah was never to make a mistake, so when we left shul we counted up the mistakes made. This was my upbringing. Missing from my religious education was any understanding of God, belief, faith, or questioning. It was very ritualistic. My Judaism then focused on doing, and very little on critical thinking or expressing a point of view, which was completely absent from my life.

"My bar mitzvah was quite an affair, like a wedding. I led services and gave a *drash* [talk] in Hebrew, then gave a Yiddish translation of the Hebrew, and then a

completely different speech in English. That night my family rented a hall, had a cantor, a catered dinner, and a dance with an orchestra. I marched in singing, my sister walked down

the aisle with a birthday cake, and a little kid came with my tallis. This was the norm in those days.

"A terrible tragedy came to my family. My father in his late 40s had a detached retina in both eyes and became legally blind. He couldn't read. He had a disability clause in an insurance policy and we lived on that. My mother went back to work as a sewing-machine operator and she was very bitter about that. She had been in the shop, got married, was out of the shop, and then had to go back in. But when it came to making a bar mitzvah for the prince of the family, which was me, no expense was spared. I was born in 1931 and the bar mitzvah was in 1944.

"As a teenager I had a rebellious period, and I remember eating my first non-kosher food. I started to drift away from the religious life and began questioning things. But one thing kept me in. I had an audition for a choir and learned that they pay you money to sing, so soon I was the alto soloist making \$20 for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It was a connection to organized Judaism which I've maintained my whole life. There were many events like the following. In 1954, I was drafted during the Korean War, sent to Arizona, and a Colonel Rosenberg, who was more than a god to a private, called me into his office and told me, just told me, that I was conducting services every Friday night. He must have seen my records, so I became the local cantor. So sort of willy-nilly, it pulled me into Judaism.

"Before that in New York I sang for professional Jewish choirs, was again the soloist, went to Grossinger and the Concord hotels for the High Holy Days, and also to an orthodox shul in Brooklyn. On Saturday nights, Sunday afternoons, and Sunday nights I sang at bar mitzvahs and weddings. Every Saturday night I would do three to five catered affairs. There was a car waiting and we would drive to the next event. This was the middle to late 1940s, and I did it for perhaps two years. Eventually I had quarrels with the director about money, so I quit and went freelance. It was a mini career.

GENERAL HYMNS AND SONGS

25 הנה מה טוב
How Good It Is and How Lovely

Folk song
Arr. by F. PINKET

Moderato

Heem z'ahm v'ah ba'hal er Hin mah mah love
dwell to- geth- er How good and love

For 2

to- geth- er. hin mah mah love

Da Capo al Fine



FAMILY CELEBRATES SEDER. A traditional Jewish Passover feast, Seder, was prepared and performed Saturday evening by the family of Dr. and Mrs. Myron Korry, 801 Hamilton, C. Ritual items included in the table setting are matzo, charoses, four cups of wine, roasted shank bone (lamb), roasted egg, moror and

parsley. Each is symbolic of a miraculous event or type of privation which accompanied the exodus of the Hebrews to the Promised Land. Shown in a phase of the dinner ceremony are from left, Michelle, 15; Mrs. Korry; Richard, 10; and Dr. Korry.

News-Gazette Photo by E. Scott Hooper

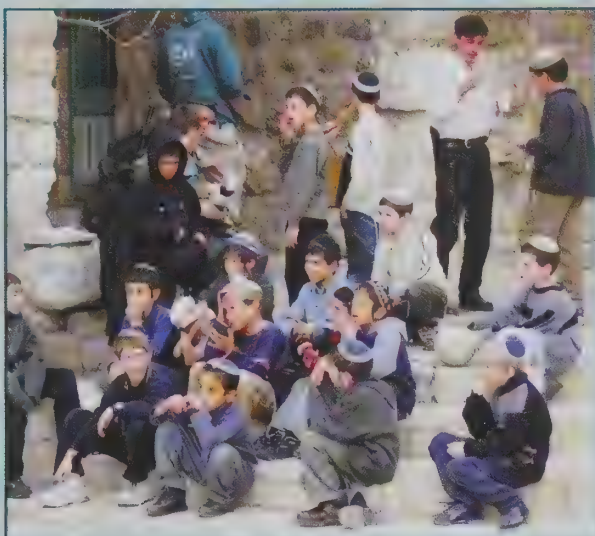
"When I married in 1955, my wife and I decided not to keep a kosher home although my wife had also come from a kosher home. Later when we went to Cal Tech, we already had two children, but our connection to the Jewish community in California was practically nonexistent. After I came to Illinois in 1960, I had a postdoc the next year at Oxford, and later a postdoc in Australia. After our fourth child, we settled in to Champaign-Urbana and started to think seriously about Sunday school for the children. I was at that time not terribly interested in affiliating with the Jewish community, but we did want a Jewish education for our kids. I remember vividly the first time I came to Sinai Temple, and I recall being 'accosted' by someone who put a 'you-must-join-the-

Temple' sell on me, right as I walked in the door, and I was really put off. I thought, 'Who the hell wants this?' But we joined.

"About that time I became involved with the university voice department, and sang with the Illinois opera group. It was a revelation to me. It opened up possibilities I couldn't have dreamed of before. I realized how badly treated I'd been by my choir directors who had exploited my natural youthful voice and wrecked me as a result. I lived a double life, one as a young faculty member teaching and doing research, and the other rubbing shoulders with the young students in the voice department. We got jobs singing in local churches. I was a Congregationalist for one year, a Presbyterian for a year, an Episcopalian for two years, and I sang with the University Place Christian Church for three years. I did it to make money and also started to sing at Sinai Temple. I introduced Sephardic pro-

nunciation of Hebrew there. At the churches I didn't take communion, and one church said we understand that for reasons of integrity you can't participate in our services, so they ended the relationship. I respected them for that.

"I remember vividly how terribly traumatized I was by the 1967 war, as I was terribly afraid we were about to witness a second Holocaust. I realized that in my Jewish education I learned little about Israel and by 1970 had arranged to go to the Hebrew University for a sabbatical. I recall earlier, in 1946 or 1947, I had heard speeches about Israel, and one guy kept running around asking for money, saying, '35 cents a bullet, 35 cents a bullet.' I didn't want to give money to kill people.



Jewish schoolchildren in the Old City of Jerusalem.

"For me, Israel was an extraordinary experience. My time learning Hebrew was one of the most spectacular learning experiences of my life. I could translate Genesis but I couldn't say hello or good morning. I had no workaday knowledge. I absorbed everything and had a wonderful

teacher. We had classes six days a week with heavy homework. Our family traveled everywhere in Israel in a Volvo station wagon and went on trips every weekend. We took one group trip camping in the Sinai at Pesach, and they brought a full Pesach dinner out to the Sinai. They asked me to conduct the Seder, which made the newspapers, as it was the first Seder in modern times held at the foot of Mt. Sinai, and the next day we climbed Mt. Sinai for the sunrise. In Israel we went to Hebron in the evening, safely then, and spent a lot of time walking around the Old City. We had many visitors, and I became a tour guide for them. I immersed myself in Israeli life, went to shul more often than here, and took Talmud classes. Many visitors we met in Jerusalem said just living here is being Jewish but with me it was the exact opposite, in that I became more ritualistic.

"I decided we could not go home after one year, so I arranged a second year as a visiting professor at Tel Aviv University. There I had to teach undergraduate classes in Hebrew, and I worked hard learning, and wrote all my lectures out in advance. It worked out great. We discussed

aliyah in the family and with friends almost every day, but decided against it. There, I learned what it meant to me to be an American.

"Israel was a transformative experience, and when I returned home I became more deeply involved in the local Jewish community. I had a very strong sense of *k'hilat Israel*, the local community of Jews. I began thinking of a style of worship different from classical reform, a more traditional service to be held within the confines of the Sinai congregation, which led to tremendous angst, pain, conflict, and tension, but we finally started a Traditional Minyan within Sinai that has been growing to this day. There was considerable opposition within the Temple. I went to the Board of Trustees and tried to make the case to them, but at first they said no. I then wrote a letter to the Board saying that they had committed 'an egregious act of religious bigotry.' Many people see the reform movement as an escape from orthodoxy, so they objected to a traditional service within their midst. Also, traditional services are not hierarchical and there is no role for a rabbi. But soon we were accepted, with the help of Marvin Steinberg, who brought people together. We are very egalitarian, men and women sit together, women are called to the Torah, we use the orthodox prayer book, and the minyan is held once or twice a month and on the holidays. The services are all in Hebrew. Last Saturday, for a special event, we had 30-40 people, but the usual number attending is 20-30. Those in the Traditional Minyan are a close group, in their own little world. Most of my friends are Jewish and connected to the Temple, although I have non-Jewish friends.

"At my son's bar mitzvah, in my talk to him, I summarized my feelings about the Jewish community. I told him that embracing the Jewish community and becoming a fully functioning member has been extraordinarily important in my life, and I hope it will be in your life. To embrace the Jewish community should be done automatically, not because you love every one of them but because it is a sacred obliga-

tion, and it will enrich you beyond any manner you can imagine. I used to have arguments all the time with Jewish members of the math department, some orthodox, some disengaged, that they have an obligation to be part of the Jewish community in some shape or form, by contributing to the Federation, or by joining the Temple. I feel this very strongly. Even when I felt myself frozen out of some Sinai Temple activities, I never once thought of leaving that organization.

"That's it."

After the recorded interview, I asked PW to go back to his earlier statement that his upbringing was more ritualistic and less focused on God, faith, and belief. He replied that his parents had come from a chaotic European scene, had escaped to America, had to struggle, focused on their kids, had a rudimentary education, and had no time for critical thinking about religious beliefs. I inquired about PW's own sense of religiosity. He replied that in his youth there was not a lot of substance and his education even then left him with a feeling of not being complete. It all changed after 1970-1972, his years in Israel. There he started to read and learn about Judaism, and went into it in depth. He said that if he talks about religion to others, or even to himself, it is more didactic, intellectual, and theological, and is like a reform Jew, but when he sings and practices Judaism, he feels it emotionally, as an orthodox Jew. Sometimes when performing as a cantor, he has a truly spiritual experience, at particular moments. When he davens, he experiences these prayers, and in the services he conducts, he improvises, so it is not just repetitive but is more creative. There are different modes of communicating and experiencing in this life, and there is a mystical aspect in any religion.

I asked about his children. His daughter married a non-Jew who eventually converted, and they are committed. His son married a non-Jew and has only a minimal connection to the Jewish community. Another son lives in Marin County, California, and is part of that whole

anti-establishment and anti-religious movement there. He has two younger children, but they are still formative and it is too early to tell.

During the late 1960s, he was deeply involved in the civil rights movement, as an activist, with white liberals and black ministers, working for integration between whites and blacks in Champaign-Urbana. After going to Israel, his interests changed to Judaism. In 1973, PW started a Yiddish group meeting in his home. There is a reader, usually PW, who reads Yiddish literature aloud and then they discuss it. In the past they had 12 to 15 members, but now about 6 to 12 people come.

Eventually PW went pro as a cantor, was hired by the congregation in Decatur for 7 or 8 years, and has been working for a conservative congregation in Springfield for the past 10 to 12 years.

MB

When I asked MB to tell me what the Jewish community means to him, his reply was, "Why ask me?" He said that he was not a good person to interview because he is an atheist and anti-religious, although he had no objection to talking to me. Religion for him consists of "mystical beliefs." As a natural scientist, religion has no part in his life. He does not belong to the Temple and is against religion because it leads people to go to war with each other. He feels the world would be better off without religions. MB

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states that he is a Jew as a “born member,” and he never denied that but did not select it. If someone asks him for his religion, he says he is Jewish, but if he is in a hospital and they ask for his religious affiliation, he says “no religion,” as he doesn’t want a rabbi or minister to come around. Israel to him is just a foreign country, and he feels that Sharon is a “terrible man.” As I write these words, they sound harsh to my ears, but MB in his professional and personal life is a very gracious and moral person.

When he comes home from a meeting or a conference, his wife CB may ask him if such and such a person is Jewish, and MB replies that he doesn’t know because he never thinks in these terms. He feels that Jews as a people place a high value on education and learning, and he admires that quality. I asked him to recall any situations in which his being Jewish arose to consciousness, and he confided that once when he had achieved a distinguished position in his profession, he felt it was amazing, because as he said to himself, “I’m just a Jewish boy.” I pressed further to ask about anti-Semitic incidents in his life. During the war years he worked as a scientist for the military, and found that his superior was half Jewish and anti-Semitic. When he came to Illinois, he discussed his being a Jew from New York with the director of his academic unit, but the director told him not to worry about it, as he was not like other Jews. When he applied to Harvard, he knew that they had Jewish quotas at the time, so he worried about it, but he was accepted anyway. Once in college, he appreciated that in the residential houses they had a mixture of students from different affiliations and backgrounds. In his high school, 80% of the students were Jewish, but they all sang Christmas carols. His father was a nonpracticing Jew, was not a member of a temple, but was very active in Jewish affairs and raised money for Jewish causes, but not for temple or religious causes. His wife CB says of MB’s father that throughout his life he was devoted to Jewish charities, but he was not religious. His father did ask him if he wanted a religious education, and he did go to Religious

School for a few years, but about the age of 12 or 13 he decided against it. He also felt that he had never directly experienced anti-Semitism.

As the interview was coming to an end, he said that a relative, involved in New York politics, was visiting that evening and that I should really interview her. What was interesting, he said, was that she is more Jewish than her mother, and that her mother was more Jewish than her mother, so that over three generations there was a movement toward the Jewish religion. At the end of the interview he suggested I also talk with his wife, CB, as her views were different.

CB

CB, MB’s wife, told me that her great-grandfather left Germany for the United States in 1845. According to family tradition, his father said to him,

“You have always been a good Jew and a good son. You are going to the United States, to a new society. I would be pleased if you kept your Jewish traditions, but you do what you want.” In 1876, CB’s grandmother, a non-



Sinai Temple’s *chupah* (wedding canopy) was commissioned in 1992, and designed by artist Phyllis Kantor to include flowers and fruits native to Israel along with the Hebrew calligraphy, “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine” (from “The Song of Songs”) woven into the tapestry. Given by Jewel and Aaron Kurland in honor of their children Ted, Steve, and Marcie. Photo courtesy of Aaron Averbuch.

practicing Jew, was one of the founding members of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, which describes itself on its Website as a humanistic religion that strives to create a more humane society. They have a program of activities including a Sunday school, and they provide rites of passage for members at life transition times such as weddings and memorials.

CB and MB did for a time go to Sinai, but she found herself annoyed that they were always raising money and giving money to Israel, and now they are not affiliated with the Temple, although they do contribute to the Federation. I asked how she felt now about Israel. She replied that in 1967 she thought the country was terrific, a homeland for displaced people to go. They once visited Israel and found it to be an amazing country, and she was astonished at what had been accomplished. But now she doesn't agree with the politics, and if she meets Israelis at a dinner party, she finds them to be dogmatic and arrogant.

When CB's son was about seven years old, he noted that most of the children on the block went to Sunday school, and he wanted to go, too. CB visited Sinai but was not pleased, as they were showing pictures of concentration camps. Her children then went to Sunday school at the Unitarian church. At about the same time, their nearest neighbors invited them to a Seder, and they went, and it was the first time she had ever been to a Seder. They still maintain their friendship with that family.

I asked CB if being Jewish was important to her, and she replied that it was "terribly important," as it was "a central part of who I am." She feels that Jews are amazing and she "can't figure it out." She knows there are bad Jews and that some are slumlords, but if you go to a new place and look for people you want to be with, they turn out to be Jews. In her view, Jews are liberal, have a concern for civil liberties, and are interested in art and music. Jews have values that she was brought up with: ethical values, a concern for people and their feelings, a sense of justice, and an appreciation of beauty and literature. Jews seem to gravitate to

these values. She added that of course they have many friends who are not Jews, but most have these values that she admires.

I remarked to CB that there seems to be a discrepancy in her sense of Jewishness and her husband's, and I asked if they ever discussed that. Her answer was, "All the time." MB does not notice who is or is not

Jewish, but CB reports that when she meets a new person, she can soon tell if that person is Jewish, 99% of the time. For her, it is not a matter of making judgments, or of evaluation, but just that she can recognize Jewish people. She also feels that she can recognize who are good people, irrespective of their religion.

CB also said that her sense of Judaism is growing, which her husband also noted. She remarked that her family has not been religious for the past 150 years or so, but her youngest granddaughter just had a bat mitzvah. "How come?" I asked. Her son couldn't care less, she replied, but he married a woman who is very Jewish and the granddaughter wanted it. It was the granddaughter's idea. Her older sister in that family did not have a bat mitzvah.



A bar mitzvah cake designed and prepared by Paula Deckard for a ceremony and reception at the Temple.

I asked CB to tell me of instances

in which she became aware of her Jewishness. She reported a series of incidents while growing up in New York in the 1930s, a historical period in which anti-Semitism was arguably more virulent than at any other

time in American history. She recalled a time when her family went to their weekend cottage in Connecticut, located in a town with few Jews. She was playing with her young friends on a Sunday morning when the mother told her to go home as the family and the other children were about to have a Sunday school session in their home. From an outside perspective the event may seem trivial, but it left a "tremendous impression" on CB. She was sent away because she was Jewish, and she felt that possibly there was something wrong with her. In 1936 she was on a German boat en route to a summer-abroad program in France when she heard a steward say he would like to wring the neck of a Jew. He spoke in German, which CB understood. On the boat there were seven girls in her circle, and once they were asking each other about their religion. When CB was asked, and replied that she was Jewish, the other girls said it would be better to keep quiet about that. But these experiences were in another world and another time, said CB, and things have changed so much.

IR

IR said that his story is a little different from that of most American Jews, as he grew up in Palestine. For him, Jewishness is a nationality: it means belonging to a certain people and has nothing to do with religion. The Jews in Palestine were a nation even before Independence. Personally, he has no religious beliefs, feels no need for prayer or religious expression, and feels that religion is more a force for evil than good in the world. Religion is a waste of resources, and it saddles people with meaningless restrictions (in addition to those pertaining to ethical and moral issues), superstitions, and unnecessary guilt feelings because they cannot hope to fulfill all its demands and prohibitions. He does not believe in any deity, and certainly not in any organized system of beliefs. Being Jewish, in Champaign-Urbana or in Israel, means belonging to the

Jewish people. When he is with other Jews, he feels a sense of community, of common ancestry, background, and nationhood. For most of his life in the United States—in New York or in Columbus, Ohio—he did not affiliate with a temple, but when he moved to Champaign-Urbana, he did join Sinai to make new friends.

AR

"I was born and grew up in Budapest, Hungary. Budapest had a population of one million, and one-quarter of them were Jews. My grandparents as well my own family kept a kosher household. We lived in an upper-middle-class Jewish neighborhood. In a city with so many Jews I didn't feel I was different.

"The old Austro-Hungarian empire had been quite liberal toward Jews, who were in the government, in parliament, and in important positions. My great grandfather got a gold medal from the Austro-Hungarian emperor because ten of his sons had fought in World War I. But all this changed in 1918 when Austria-Hungary was on the losing side of the war. The Austro-Hungarian empire was partitioned, Hungary lost a lot of its territory, and a new fascist regime came to power. In 1938 anti-Jewish laws were passed and my father lost his business because of that, but he had another business importing from Central America and we lived all right.

"I wasn't aware what it means being Jewish until the time I went to high school in 1940. It was difficult for a Jewish child to get into high school in 1940, but I was accepted finally by a Catholic convent school, a lycée. Most of the other girls and some of the nuns were very hostile toward me as a Jew, even though I was first in the class academically. In one instance, while going to the blackboard, I inadvertently touched someone's desk and I saw that person cleaning the place where I, a Jew, had touched. I went to that school for three years.

"In 1941, Hungary entered the war on the side of Germany. Jews were called up for national service, which meant physical labor service, not the army. Young Jews were sent out to the Russian front and killed there, not by the Russians but by the Hungarians. I had a cousin, a very

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others are still
going to school.**

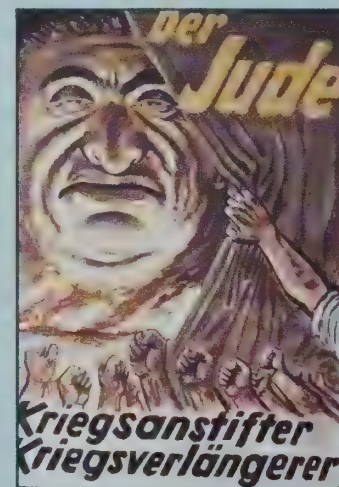
good-looking young man and champion swimmer, who was sent to the Russian front lines. He and thousands of other young Jewish men were driven through minefields in advance of the Hungarian soldiers. He died there. But Hungarians also killed Jews not only for 'useful' reasons, but just for fun. But we, in Hungary, didn't know that at the time.

"In the fall of 1943 I transferred to a Protestant lycée in Miskolc, a town eighty miles from Budapest, where my relatives lived. I didn't experience any animosity there,

maybe because Protestants were in the minority in Hungary. We, Jews in Hungary, thought that we were relatively safe; even some Jewish refugees from Austria sought shelter in Budapest. We sheltered a Jewish refugee girl from Slovakia in our home. Her older sister of seventeen had been taken by the Germans in Bratislava and sent in a transport of Jewish girls to the Russian front to serve as prostitutes for the German soldiers. The rest of the family had fled to Hungary.

"On March 19, 1944, the German army occupied Hungary. The next day my aunt took me back to Budapest from Miskolc. Soldiers and police were stopping people at the railroad station looking for Jews, but my aunt and I didn't look Jewish, and I had my old ID papers from the Catholic high school that I hoped would get me through. But no one stopped us. A few days later my father, who was 42, was called up for forced labor service and we never saw him again. A few weeks later the Jews in Budapest were to be placed in a ghetto, but as there were too many Jews for the appointed ghetto area, some were moved to certain apartment buildings located outside the ghetto. These 'Jewish houses' were marked with a large yellow star. My mother, sister, and I moved to a room in one of these houses. The Jews in other parts of Hungary, in the countryside, and even in the suburbs of Budapest were all deported to Auschwitz. Mysteriously, the deportation stopped on July 2, after a large-scale bombing of Budapest. At the time, the Germans said that in the camps the young people would work for the Germans and the old people would take care of the children, but some of us feared that the concentration camps were not going to be that benevolent.

"My father had a Christian colleague in his office who had a daughter my age. The day after the Germans had come, this colleague said to my father that it was against the law to help Jews to hide, so he could not give him a copy of his daughter's papers, but, he said, he would leave them in his desk drawer, and if someone stole them it was not his fault. So my father took the papers. But we still thought that we would survive till the end of the war, which seemed near, in the Jewish house, and we



Translation: "The Jew: The inciter of war, the prolonger of war."
This poster was released in late 1943 or early 1944.

kept those documents as an emergency solution. One day, while we were living in the Jewish house, my sister, then fifteen, and another girl were caught outside the house after curfew, walking this girl's dog. A German officer asked, "What are you Jewish girls doing outside?" and told them they would have to go to the Gestapo headquarters. The day they went, Romania decided to make a separate peace, so the Gestapo had no time for them that day and they were sent home. They were very lucky.

"In the summer of 1944 the Swedish and Swiss consulates in Budapest gave special Swedish or Swiss passports to Jews saying that they would be allowed to enter Sweden or Switzerland, but even though I stood in lines for many days I never could get such a passport. It was fortunate, as eventually such passports were disregarded, and Jews holding them were treated like all other Jews.

"On October 16, 1944, the most extreme Hungarian Nazi group, the Arrowcross party, took power in a coup. The Arrowcross militia were Hungarian ultra-Fascists who had black or dark green uniforms, a red armband with a white circle that had a black cross in the middle, with each end of the cross forming an arrow. The Hungarians were fascists from the beginning, but the Arrowcross soldiers were worse than the Nazis.

"In late October it was ordered that all Jewish women between the ages of 16 and 60 had to report to a brick factory in Budapest, from where they would be sent to forced labor camps. I was 17 at the time. My mother was terrified to let me go, put me to bed, and told the super that I was very sick and would go as soon as I was well. My mother had a doctor's certificate, and the super signed the paper as well. I had always been polite to this super, always said hello and goodbye, so he allowed

me to stay. A super was employed by the landlord to keep the building in order, but from March 1944 on had the added police responsibility to see that all the laws and regulations regarding Jews were carried out.

"There was a curfew that allowed Jews to leave their houses for only two to three hours a day. One day in early November, when I was coming home, I saw the Arrowcross militia herding people from my house into groups on the street, and marching them away. I stayed on the corner,

held my purse in front of my chest, and removed the yellow star. I intercepted my mother and sister before they came home, and we escaped by not going back to the building.

"While we were on the street corner, one Arrowcross soldier approached. He turned out to be the son of a super where a friend of my sister lived. This soldier was 17 or 18, and said he hated all Jews and wanted to kill them except for my sister, as they had played together

as children. We said we wanted to go to an aunt's house in another part of the city, so he took us there. This aunt, my father's younger sister, had married a Catholic and converted. She allowed us to stay only one night. It was dangerous to help Jews in any way; there were posters on the walls saying that anyone who hides Jews or helps them escape would be disemboweled.

"A Jewish underground functioned in Budapest to help Jews hide, and they found places for us. My sister was placed with a woman who had a Jewish husband. The woman had told the underground that if they found a Jewish girl who didn't look Jewish, knew how to behave, and had papers, she could stay there. Her Jewish husband was hiding at



German troops parade through Warsaw, Poland in 1939.

home, in bed under the pillows and duvet during the day, and came out only at night to go to the bathroom and to eat. That is how he survived the war. The super of that house was a communist and helpful, not because he loved Jews but because he hated the Germans and the fascists. I was placed with a woman in another apartment house, who wanted to help because she was engaged to a Jew and they could not get married because of the anti-Jewish laws. Budapest is a town divided into two parts, Buda and Pest, by the Danube. My sister's hiding place was in Buda and mine was in Pest.

"The papers one had to carry consisted of a police registration, a birth certificate, a baptismal certificate, and the parents' marriage certificate. These gave the names of the parents, the parents' ages and religion, and the same information for the grandparents. Since we had only one set of original papers, I had to find ways to get registrar's copies for my sister. I also had to figure out ways to get police registration certificates for both of us. Since we had the same name and birth date in the papers, this was not easy to do.

"One day we were in a café together with two boys, one a member of the Jewish underground and the other his Italian Christian friend who was living in Budapest, when a Hungarian soldier, slightly drunk, approached and told us how many Jews he had killed that day. We replied, "Great work, continue," but it was very dangerous, as I and my sister had the same papers, and the two boys also had identical papers, because the Italian boy had had his papers copied for his Jewish friend. My knees were shaking under the table.

"Another time in a café with my sister, there was a young Hungarian sublieutenant sitting at a nearby table, and my sister was flirting with him, making eye contact, which was stupid. This was a time when people were stopped on the street or on a bus and asked for their ID papers. The officer came over to our table and we were talking, when he looked

at us both and said, "You girls are Jewish." He then said that we shouldn't be afraid of him reporting us, because he was one-quarter Jewish as he had a grandmother who was Jewish. He said he knew we were Jewish because we kept fingering the silver crosses on our necklaces, and I had been talking about a writer and a producer, and middle-class Christian girls don't know about such things. Nearly twenty-five years later my sister met the man in an office in Budapest. They recognized each other and talked about the incident.

"From my hiding place, almost every night, I heard machine gun fire, and knew that many Jews were being killed by the Hungarians and thrown into the Danube. These were Jews caught living under false identities.

"On December 24, 1944, the Russian siege of Budapest began. We all had to go down to the basement air-raid shelter. I began to feel uncomfortable in the house, since there were refugees placed there from other areas of the country, Christians who were lower class and peasants. They were different from me, and I

believed there was a thin line between being different and being recognized as Jewish, so I decided to leave. In early January 1945, there was a one day cease-fire, and I left the house. There were dead bodies on the street, and I saw naked dead bodies stacked like firewood in the courtyard of the Great Jewish Synagogue, 'Dohany Temple.' I went to my

**From my hiding
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mother's place, which used to be a Swedish protected house in which a Jewish doctor, very cleverly, had set up a field hospital in the basement. My mother worked there, and I could stay. Once they brought in a German soldier with internal bleeding and I was asked to apply pressure so the bleeding might stop, which I did for hours. I thought, if I apply less pressure he will die, and probably he is a terrible man, but maybe he has a family. So I kept the pressure on and he lived.

"When the Russian army came in, we went back to the Jewish house. Although Pest had already been liberated, fighting was still going on for Buda, and we still had to live in the air-raid shelter. The Russians stole small things, like watches and jewelry, and raped women. Once, when the Russians came to our basement, my uncle hid me under his blanket. After the fighting stopped, my mother, sister, and I went to Miskolc, and found that most of our family had been killed in the death camps. I told my mother, 'I want to get out of Hungary as soon as possible, as I can't live here among eight million murderers.' In June of 1946 I was smuggled by the Jewish rescue network to Austria and then to Germany. There I worked for the Americans as a translator, as I spoke German and English. I tried for three years to get into the United States, but the Hungarian quotas were full, and eventually I decided that I had to get on with my life and went to Israel in 1949. I married IR in 1957, and came with him to the United States in 1958. Our daughter was born here. We went back to Israel in 1962, but came back five years later and have been living here since then. All our friends here were Jews, but we did not belong to a temple.

"What it took to survive that last year of the holocaust was a little intelligence, lots of courage, and mainly luck. When I hear American Jews talk about what being Jewish means to them, I feel I have graduated while the others are still going to school. American Jews are so naïve and inexperienced, and don't learn from history. Other nations and

movements embraced the Jews when it was in their interest, but then they dropped them. In Russia the Communists dropped the Jews, and now the left in Europe and other places are against the Jews. In the long history of Vienna, during one century the Jews were happy there and prospered, but then they were forced to leave and their property and money were taken. A century or so later, when they were needed, they were welcomed back and the cycle began all over again. It has been the same since the Romans conquered Israel 2,000 years ago. Now Jews are prosperous in America, but we don't know how it will be 20 or 100 years from now. All it takes is a deep depression or a lost war and the Jews are blamed. It doesn't take much. In Europe there is an underlying anti-Semitism all the time.

"I could understand it, after the war, when European Jews emigrated to Catholic South America and lived there as Christians. They had suffered terrible things, and wanted to break the cycle. What I don't understand is when an American Jew denies his Jewishness, whether actively or passively. You are a Jew because you are born a Jew, like some people are born short and others are born tall. There is something different about Jews, and it is not just outside appearance. Christians pick up on it, and will always refer to Jews as the 'Jewish People,' and they are right, historically as well as culturally. Israel helped Jews wherever help was needed, as in Iran, Russia, Ethiopia, and Argentina. I believe that it is imperative, in order for Jews to survive anywhere, that the State of Israel survive. I cannot understand when American Jews don't support Israel because the party in power there is not the one they would like. It is up to the Israelis to elect the government that they believe is best for them. It is their lives and their children's lives that are on the line. We Jews in the United States, living in comparative safety and comfort, should not second-guess them, only support them."

A Few Conclusions

What can we learn from these Jewish voices? Obviously, the Jewish community has many different meanings and there are many ways of being a Jew. MB acknowledges that he is Jewish and that is about as far as it goes. In his own lifetime he was not so much a rejectionist but rather came from a German Jewish family that had not been religious for over a century. Being Jewish is becoming increasingly important to his wife CB, but thus far there has not been an active affiliation with any Jewish organization. The stories of AS and PW remind us that people move in and out of their Jewish practice and identity, as they do with all identities which are context sensitive and may emerge only in certain situations. PW's story particularly informs us that Judaism may be practiced in different ways as one moves through life.

For IR, being Jewish is equivalent to nationhood, a nationality, a position not uncommon for Israelis. Interestingly, as PW reminded me during our interview, the idea of the Jewish people as a Jewish nation runs counter to the reform movement as it originated in Germany, because there the emphasis was on Jews as a religious community and not as a national one. The fear and the danger were of expressing a dual loyalty, so a national entity was rejected. Now, that is completely reversed, and Israel is embraced and has for many become part of the fabric of Jewish life. Many ultra-orthodox still reject the idea of a Jewish nation.

The relationship between Israel and the Diaspora is a thread running through these stories, but there is also a tension. Israel is a homeland, a place where Jews from Russia, or Ethiopia, or Argentina can escape to, so it is important for the Diaspora to support Israel, but on the other hand Israel depends upon a strong Diaspora Jewish community. At the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, the issue recently arose

regarding how charitable contributions should be allocated between support for Jewish causes in America on the one hand, and support for Israel on the other. Almost everyone wanted to support both, Israel and the Jewish community, but the hard question was how much money should go to each.

Another dimension throughout these stories is anti-Semitism. For AR, the situation has not changed essentially since the Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE. Some historical periods may be good for the Jews and they may prosper, but then during periods of societal stress, the majority blames the Jews, just as the political left and many Arabs do now. AR feels that Jews can never take their acceptance in society for granted. This replicates the history of German and Hungarian Jews, many of whom changed their names, expressed loyalty to the state, and even converted to Christianity only to learn to their horror and dismay that in the eyes of the Nazis their efforts to assimilate were useless and they were considered Jews the same as the most orthodox shetl Jew from Eastern Europe. Even today in America, with its acceptance of diversity and ethnicity, some very assimilated and educated Jews harbor a lingering haunting feeling that, after they leave a group of their gentile friends or associates, someone will comment about their Jewishness. For some, the feeling is almost palpable.

FK and AS illustrate another aspect of the Jewish experience: the turn to socialism or communism that arose originally in Europe partially as a response to oppression. In a sense, socialism became a substitute for Judaism. Others feel ambivalent about being Jewish, possibly a residue from childhood, possibly a matter of self-definition, possibly a reflection of current conditions in American life. It is not only a question of how one feels about being Jewish, but the degree to which one puts that feeling into action. For PW and for leaders in the Jewish community, affiliation and participation are requirements for membership.



At left is a mohel certificate from 1944 (courtesy of Lynn Wachtel), attesting to the fact that on March 27 of that year, at the age of 8 days, Edward Berry Weisel entered into the Covenant of Abraham Our Forefather by way of his ritual circumcision or brit milah. The document is valuable as proof that the person named is Jewish, and is a source for the person's Hebrew name.

Before the circumcision, the mohel recites the benediction: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments, and hast given us the command concerning circumcision." When the mohel begins the circumcision, the father recites: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments, and hast commanded us to make our sons enter the covenant of Abraham our father."

All in attendance then respond: "Even as this child has entered into the covenant, so may he enter into the Torah, the nuptial canopy, and into good deeds."

become an option, a choice one makes. Various factors have influenced each person's feelings about being Jewish: attitudes and experiences of the holocaust, Israel, and anti-Semitism, as well as family background, early religious education, social and

Possibly the main impression to be drawn from reading these narratives is their diversity. All narrators were well educated, at least in their seventies, and hence of the same generation, moving through history together as a cohort, but their ways of defining themselves as Jews and their relations to organized Judaism were very different. Part of the explanation may be that this is America in 2004, where individual freedom and choice are protected by the Constitution, and where there are few restraints. The practice of Judaism, and all other religions, has

economic status, marriage, and profession.

Yet despite the obvious diversity, these are Jewish stories told by Jews. Irrespective of the divergencies in life experiences, practices, and opinions, the reader will recognize that these are Jewish stories, although not necessarily one's own story. Thus, there is an elusive cohesiveness in these disparate stories, in this tapestry of Jewish Voices.

Right:
Members of the
Brown family from
which the Carons
and Silvermans
hail.
*Photo courtesy of
Robert Silverman.*

Below:
*Moses and the Ten
Commandments*
by artist Henry
Gamson from
Chicago is a ham-
mered bronze bas-
relief given in
1976 by Ann
Davis Goodman
and husband
James in memory
of her mother.



Part III

The Great Personalities



"The Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other nation. If I were an atheist, and believed blind eternal fate, I should still believe that fate had ordained the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing the nations."

—John Adams

Isaac Kuhn

September 11, 1866–January 21, 1956

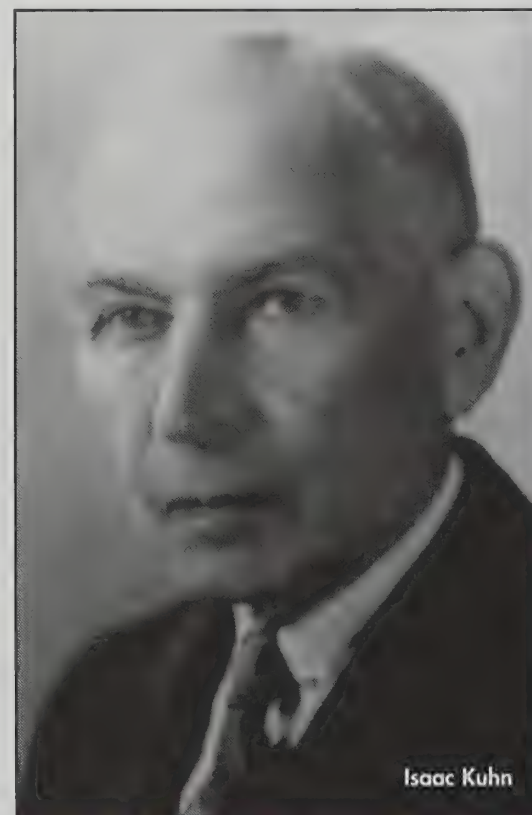
by Harry Liebersohn

Anyone sitting in the main worship area of Sinai Temple may notice a wall plaque in memory of Isaac Kuhn. This place of honor in our Temple is richly deserved for this leader of Sinai Temple, of the Jewish community in Champaign-Urbana, of civic affairs in Champaign, and of the nation's first Hillel Foundation at the University of Illinois. Isaac Kuhn was a member of our community who exemplified the creativity and ethics of Reform Judaism.

Isaac Kuhn's father, Joseph Kuhn, emigrated from Germany to the United States and moved to Champaign in 1865. In the same year, he married Lena Loeb of Louisville, Kentucky. Isaac, their oldest child, was born on September 11, 1866.¹ He grew up in a family with spare means, as his father worked early and late to establish his clothing business, and the parents had no opportunity to provide him with a Jewish education during his early years in Champaign. A childhood experience of sitting on a bench for two hours in an Orthodox shul in New York did not whet his appetite to learn more about Judaism. In 1878 his parents sent him to Cincinnati for his bar mitzvah preparations. There he stayed with Professor Aufrecht, who had a number of students boarding with him at a time when the Reform Jewish seminary was still holding classes in a basement. Aufrecht was friendly with Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise, who often came for Friday night dinners and who supervised his bar mitzvah learning. In later years Isaac still savored the memories of Mrs. Aufrecht's sweet and sour fish. He remained with the Aufrechts for about two years in 1878–1879. Living and learning with these founders

of Reform Judaism in America was a transforming experience; his memories of the Cincinnati professors later spurred him to seek out other Jews and Jewish organizations.²

Isaac's family called him home when he was seventeen (in the meantime he had also spent ten months with a German-Jewish family in New York), and he began working in the family clothing store. At age twenty-one he was able to buy a half interest in the store, and after ten years' hard work he became full owner. At his father's urging he joined B'nai B'rith after his twenty-first birthday and attended meetings faithfully. He quickly developed clear principles for Jewish activities in Champaign-Urbana: to further good relations within the Jewish community, between Jews and non-Jews, and between the local Jewish community and Jewish students. In this spirit he became one of the leaders of the Ivrim Society, a student organization, until its merger with the Intercollegiate Menorah Society in 1912. He also served as president of the Champaign-Urbana Hebrew Congregation (renamed Sinai Temple on January 4, 1914) from 1909 to 1910, and he tried over many years' time (without success) to have a synagogue built close to campus.³ Kuhn's broad-mindedness and concern for students



Isaac Kuhn

allowed him to become one of the founders of Hillel. The idea emerged in part from his conversations with Chauncey Baldwin, a professor of English at the university. Baldwin, a Congregationalist, had a warm admiration for the Hebrew Bible and an unaffected interest in furthering the religious awareness of Jewish students. In 1921 they were joined by a charismatic young rabbi, Benjamin M. Frankel, who established Hillel in 1923 as an all-inclusive Jewish student organization sponsored by B'nai B'rith; Isaac Kuhn served as a founding member of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation Commission.⁴ He served once again as president of Sinai

Temple from 1926-1934.

Isaac Kuhn's business activities and service to the non-Jewish community were dimensions of his life's work that naturally extended from the principles of his Jewish community involvements. In his business he made a point of generous treatment of his workers, some of whom stayed with him for decades, and of fairness toward his customers. Outside the store "the man who built Main Street," as he was called, led the effort for decades to turn downtown

Champaign from a muddy railroad stop into a solid civic and commercial center. "Ike," to those who knew him, clearly enjoyed mingling with non-Jewish and Jewish civic leaders alike; active in the Kiwanis Club and the YMCA, he received the Civic Service Award of the Champaign-Urbana YMCA in 1941. His energy for good causes seems to have been boundless: he took special pleasure in working with the YMCA to find employment for boys; helped bring families from Nazi Germany to the United States; and campaigned against the high rates charged by utility companies, going to Springfield at one

..."the man
who built
Main Street,"
as he was
called...

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READY MADE CLOTHING,
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Any Man, Woman, Child, Choctaw, African, or "Heathen Chinese" who will explain this Puzzle, and present a \$10 GREENBACK* at the counter of Joseph Kuhn's

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will be entitled to the value thereof in Clothing at
ACTUAL COST !

* Kuhn positively WILL NOT take Specie in payment for Goods.

In an advertisement that appeared in an 1870 Champaign directory, Joseph Kuhn offered a puzzle to his prospective customers. It cleverly suggested, "When you want a well-selected stock from which to pick your purchase, call us." Note that the language describing the customers is reflective of its time.

point to make his case against them. As with his Jewish activities, his approach to the wider world impressed his contemporaries because it was grounded in firmly held, generously applied ideals. He warned against the emergence of a society like England's based on privilege and status and admired such American political leaders as Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, who in their different ways seemed to him to embody a distinctly American, democratic politics. He distributed gratis over two thousand copies of his book, *Abraham Lincoln: A Vast Future* (1946), a compilation of articles on Lincoln's legacy, to friends and business colleagues.⁵ There must have been many charitable deeds that went unrecorded, for he preferred to give to charities anonymously. What mattered to this ebullient leader was not public attention, but mitzvahs for their own sake.

Acknowledgments

My thanks to Mrs. Ruth Youngerman, daughter of Isaac Kuhn and Rose Adler Kuhn, for discussing her father's life and her family's history with me. I am also grateful to Winton Solberg and Asa Rubenstein for their research; my debt to them should be obvious from the following endnotes.

Notes

CCHS = Champaign County Historical Society archives, Urbana Free Library. Materials cited from this archive come from the biographical folder for Isaac Kuhn.

1. "Joseph Kuhn, City's Oldest Clothier, Dead," *Champaign County Gazette*, 28 Dec. 1915, CCHS.
2. Isaac Kuhn, Autobiographical sketch; original in the possession of Mrs. Ruth Youngerman.
3. Winton U. Solberg, "The Early Years of the Jewish Presence at the University of Illinois," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* II/2 (Summer 1992), 215-245, here 218; and Asa Rubenstein, "Midwestern Jewish Commitment and Practical American Idealism: The History of Sinai Temple," 9-13, 16-17. Rubenstein's

work is a preliminary manuscript that served as the basis for his article, "Midwestern Jewish Commitment and Practical Jewish Idealism: The Early History of Sinai Temple, Champaign, Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* LXXV/2 (Summer 1982), 82-100. My thanks to Allen Avner for sharing with me a copy of the preliminary manuscript that he received from Mrs. Youngerman.


4. Winton U. Solberg, "Early Years of the Jewish Presence at the University of Illinois," 225-231; Rubenstein, "Midwestern Jewish Commitment" (preliminary manuscript), 10.
5. "Many People Are Selfish, and When Anything of Benefit Is Brought Forth, They Knock It, Says Isaac Kuhn, Leader in Civic, Business Affairs," no date, no newspaper name; "Isaac Kuhn Speaks On Utilities Problem At Progressive Conference," *Champaign and Urbana Citizen*, 19 June 1931; "Isaac Kuhn Wins 'Y' Civic Award," *The News-Gazette* (Champaign), 15 Jan. 1941; "Postscripts," *News-Gazette*, 1 June 1941; Eddie Jacquin, "In Perspective: Ike Kuhn's Lincoln Book," *News-Gazette*, 8 Jan. 1948; Willard Hansen, "Isaac Kuhn, Main St. 'Dean,' Marks 82d Birthday," *News-Gazette*, 12 Sept. 1948; Joe Patrick, "'Give Other Fellow Best,' Kuhn Urges On Birthday," *News-Gazette*, no date (Sept.?) 1946.

Abram Leon Sachar

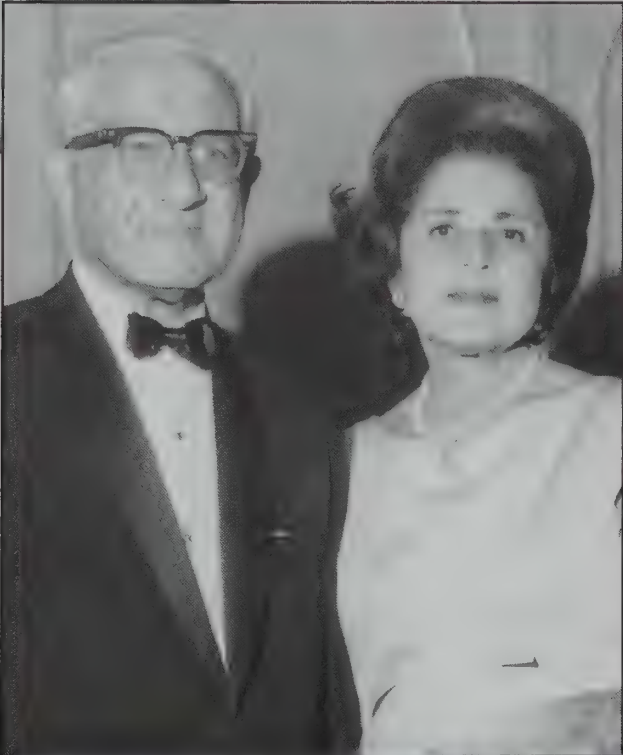
by Elizabeth H. Pleck

Abram Leon Sachar (1899–1993) had two careers in his long lifetime. The first was as national director of Hillel from 1933 to 1947. He was instrumental in building Hillel from ten chapters, including the first one at the University of Illinois, to more than 60 in the United States and Canada when he retired from Hillel in 1947. His second career was as the first president of Brandeis University, a Jewish-sponsored nonsectarian university founded in Waltham, Massachusetts, in 1948. Born in New York City in 1899, Sachar grew up in St. Louis. His mother was born in Jerusalem and his father was a Lithuanian immigrant who became a successful realtor; his parents had an arranged marriage. Sachar attended Washington University for two years before enlisting in World War I at age seventeen. At the end of the war, he spent a year at Harvard learning French and German and then returned to Washington University, where he received a combined BA and MA in 1920.¹ At age twenty-four he completed his doctoral dissertation at Cambridge University on the impact of the House of Lords on the British parliamentary system in the nineteenth century. Jewish scholars in the humanities and social sciences found it difficult to secure appointments at universities in the 1920s. Sachar was a last-minute hire by the history department of the University of Illinois to teach British and modern European history. He was only the second Jew to teach in the University's history department.²

Incidents of housing discrimination against Jews were quite common in college towns in the 1920s, and discrimination in housing was legal.³



At left, Abram Leon Sachar appears in a newspaper article. Bottom, Dr. and Mrs. Sachar (the former Thelma Horwitz) attend a gala event. Photos courtesy of Hillel archives and Brandeis University, respectively.



Arriving in Champaign in 1923, Sachar encountered anti-Semitism in finding a place to live in Champaign-Urbana. He had rented a room in a family home, only to be put out when the landlady's husband confided to his wife that he thought their prospective tenant looked Jewish. She told Sachar that because he did not believe that Jesus was divine, she would feel uncomfortable having him live in her home, and she added that she thought he would feel ill at ease as well.⁴ Sachar found alternative lodging in a building owned by a Jewish landlord and shared rooms for two years with Rabbi Benjamin Frankel. In 1921 Frankel, a gregarious six-foot-four-inch native of Peoria who was finishing his studies at Hebrew Union College, had been hired as a part-time rabbi at Sinai Temple.⁵

The Founding of Hillel

Frinkel was also one of the handful of men responsible for the founding of Hillel in 1923. Isaac Kuhn, a founder of Sinai Temple, and Edward Chauncey Baldwin, an assistant professor of English with an interest in the literature of the Bible, persuaded Julius Rosenwald, the Chicago-based Sears and Roebuck magnate and philanthropist, to provide the seed funds for a Jewish religious organization modeled on those for students from Protestant denominational and Catholic backgrounds. Frankel, selected as the first director, persuaded the B'nai Brith to become the permanent sponsor of the campus organization. Frankel chose the name of Hillel to symbolize devotion to Jewish learning. He also organized Hillel foundations on several other campuses. After returning from a trip to Palestine, Frankel died of a heart attack at age 30 in 1927.

Sachar, who considered Frankel his best friend, was asked to take Frankel's place at Hillel on the University of Illinois campus, first as a temporary replacement, then on a permanent basis in 1929. He became national director of the organization in 1933.⁶ National offices for Hillel

were located in Chicago. Sachar moved the headquarters to Champaign-Urbana because he believed that the director should teach, counsel, perform religious services for and serve the needs of Jewish students on a college campus.

While the director of Hillel, Sachar initially remained an instructor in the history department. In 1929 President David Kinley of the University of Illinois told Sachar it was against university rules for a faculty member to hold two positions.

Kinley noted that the university was a tax-supported institution and would not allow a faculty member to also head a religious organization.⁷ Sachar resigned his faculty position.

During his years at Hillel, Sachar found time to write three books, including his major textbook in Jewish history, *A History of the Jews* (1930), and edit a collection of the sermons of Leon Harrison, the rabbi of Temple Israel in St. Louis. While his salary was paid by Hillel, Sachar also took on the role of part-time and unpaid rabbi for Sinai Temple, even though he was always called Doctor

Sachar and never rabbi. None of the small reform congregations in central Illinois had a full-time rabbi. On Friday nights Sachar occupied a pulpit in Springfield or Bloomington or conducted Orthodox services at Hillel located in second-floor rented rooms above Kandy's Barbership at 625 East Green Street, in the business section adjacent to the campus. Sinai Temple was a small Reform congregation, consisting mainly of German-Jewish families. By the time Sachar became part-time rabbi, the

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Congregation had already built its large brick structure at 301 West Clark Street in Champaign (the corner of State and Clark) about a mile from the university. Services were held Sunday mornings at the Temple, and after that, families often gathered in their homes for a large Sunday dinner. As a part-time rabbi, Sachar assumed no control over the small Sunday school, although he did officiate at confirmations. Bar mitzvahs were mainly found among the small Orthodox congregation, B'nai Israel, but Sachar did perform a few at Sinai Temple. Although not a rabbi, he was licensed to perform marriages, often for students at the university, and also to preside over funerals.

The Sachar Family

Thelma Horwitz, also a graduate of Washington University, was courted by both Benjamin Frankel and Abram Sachar, but she chose Sachar. They were married in 1926. The Sachars raised three sons in Champaign: Howard (b. 1928), Edward (b. 1933), and David (b. 1940). Thelma's mother, a widow, came to live with them. After residing in apartments and rented houses for several years, they bought a house at 714 Arlington Court in Champaign in 1932. They welcomed students to their home, and Thelma was active in the National Association of University Women and Hadassah. The Sachars kept a kosher home and ordered their meat from a kosher butcher in Chicago.⁸

Abram Sachar was most proud of several programs he developed as director of Hillel. Many Christian students were interested in learning more about Passover because they saw it as Jesus' Last Supper. At the Interfaith Passover Seder held on campus, Sachar saw his role as explaining Judaism to non-Jews to promote understanding of Judaism and alleviate anti-Semitism among Christian students, which he believed prevalent among students from small towns. Sachar continued the Open Forum

speakers' series Frankel had started. During the period of the highest unemployment during the depression, 1932, Abba Hillel Silver, a noted Reform rabbi, told a Forum audience that the U.S. economic system was fundamentally unfair.⁹ The journalist Dorothy Thompson spoke in 1932 about her interview with Hitler and returned in October of 1941 to advocate U.S. entry into the war against Germany.¹⁰ Eleanor Roosevelt, concerned that American youth had given up on engagement with democracy, lectured about "Youth in a World of Turmoil" in 1937.¹¹ Sachar, who offered courses for credit at Hillel, also taught a for-credit course on comparative religion at the Newman Center. Among the students who took his classes was James Reston, then the editor of the *Daily Illini* and later



Abram Sachar, Harry S. Truman, and Eleanor Roosevelt at Brandeis University graduation ceremonies. Photo reproduced by permission of Brandeis University. Copyright © Brandeis University. All rights reserved.



Abram Sachar and Stephen Wise. Photo reproduced by permission of Brandeis University. Copyright © Brandeis University. All rights reserved.

a columnist for the *New York Times*.¹² The speakers Hillel brought to campus were socialists, New Deal Democrats, and avant-garde artists. In the 1930s university deans were frightened of Communists, especially Jewish Communists. Sachar met yearly with university deans to provide reassurance that Hillel had no relationship with Communist students on campus.¹³

As a result of his visible presence at the university campus, Sachar was able to turn out large crowds to hear his Sunday morning sermons at Sinai Temple. High Holy Day services were too large for the

Temple and were held on the campus. Sachar's High Holy Day sermon in 1932 was entitled, "Tombs of the Mighty, Reflections on the Resting Places of Jesus, Moses, Lenin, and Spinoza."¹⁴ His second High Holy Day sermon that year described Jewish persecution in Germany, Romania, and Poland and portrayed Palestine as becoming "the land of milk and honey."¹⁵ Ever the New Dealer, his sermon at the Temple on a Sunday morning in March of 1937 favored FDR's court-packing scheme, which Sachar argued would bring the Supreme Court into contemporary "organic thinking."¹⁶ His audience was by no means confined to Sinai Temple members. The Jewish fraternities and sororities on campus required that first-year students attend Sinai Temple

services once a month. About a quarter of the audience for Sunday morning services consisted of Christians and Jews from other Illinois towns. Sachar drew such crowds that the Congregation had to set up a loudspeaker system so that the overflow audience seated in the Temple basement could hear him.¹⁷ By 1941 sermons by Sachar and an alternate rabbi were broadcast on local radio.¹⁸

The relations between Sinai Temple and Sachar as director of Hillel were cordial and mutually beneficial with underlying tension.

Hillel was founded by and depended on support from Sinai Temple presidents and leaders. Isaac Kuhn, Sinai Temple president from 1926 to 1934, and Leonard Lewis, the president from 1934 to 1939, were key contributors to Hillel, and Samuel Shmikler of the Temple chaired the Hillel Building Fund in 1945.¹⁹ In turn, Sachar along with Simon Litman and his wife Rachel, first president of the



Rachel Frank Litman, wife of Simon Litman and first president of the Temple Sisterhood.

Temple Sisterhood, were among the few Jews at the university who identified as Jews and belonged to the Temple. Sachar—warm, witty, and humorous, referred to affectionately by the Hillel students as "Doc"—was nonetheless at odds with the largely German-Jewish congregation and leaders of Sinai Temple in two respects. First, Sachar, the grandson of an Orthodox rabbi, believed German Jews had thrown out too much of Jewish ritual in their adoption of Reform Judaism. He sent his sons to a cheder run by the Orthodox families in town to learn Hebrew, and his

sons had their bar mitzvahs in St. Louis, where his family lived. There were bitter fights about having the service on Sunday morning. At the annual meeting held in his office at Hillel in 1939, Sachar made a motion to move the Sunday morning services to Friday nights. The Temple was willing to adopt his suggestion for six months, but then returned to services on Sunday mornings.²⁰

He was also at odds with the Congregation over Zionism. Sachar believed in the necessity for and the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. In his *Sufferance Is the Badge: The History of Jews in Europe*, again published by Knopf, he described Palestine as the inspiration for Jews through the world and called on American Jews to provide for the support of a Jewish homeland.²¹ With the exception of the Litmans, many of the members of the Congregation were opposed to the establishment of a Jewish state.

Activism During World War II

In the 1940s, Sachar was traveling to raise funds for Hillel to open new campus foundations, and a succession of young rabbis, the assistant directors of Hillel, conducted services at Sinai Temple. The Forum series, Sachar's book *Sufferance*, and his sermons helped to increase awareness at Hillel and at Sinai Temple about the rise of fascism and the persecution of European Jews. Three years later, Jewish fraternities and sororities on the University of Illinois campus were sponsoring five German-Jewish refugee students.²² Albert Einstein had written to Sachar to enlist his aid in securing visas for German-Jewish students to study at U.S. universities. While he continued to organize the Refugee Student Program, Sachar wanted to reach a larger audience near the moment of Allied victory. In 1945 Sachar had a daily news program on WMAQ in Chicago, narrating the Allied advance toward Germany.²³

Later the same year he conducted a similar program for a New York radio station. Broadcasting in 1945, one can assume that Sachar, acutely conscious of Jewish persecution by the Nazis and the refugee crisis, was also describing allied liberation of the death camps.

At the end of the war, Hillel established the B'nai B'rith Hillel Displaced Persons Scholarships. In 1946 Sachar sent his friend, Zionist poet and author Marie Syrkin, to Germany as a Hillel representative to find applicants for Hillel scholarships among concentration camp survivors. Jewish sororities and fraternities continued the sponsorship they had begun during the war. A Hillel student addressed Sinai Temple in 1946, describing reports about half-dead concentration camp survivors in Lithuania and asking for contributions to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's relief efforts.²⁴ Sachar took a year's leave of absence from Hillel to work with B'nai B'rith officers in Washington, D.C., to create a new administrative structure for the Hillel organization. The family rented a house in Washington, but the Sachars kept their legal residence in Champaign.²⁵ While in Washington, Sachar tangled with Breckinridge Long, a supervisor of the immigrant visa section of the State Department since 1940 who used his position to block the flow of Jewish refugees into the United States. Indifferent to the horror on an unprecedented scale that had unfolded, Long saw himself besieged by "refugee enthusiasts" and "Jewish professional agitators" such as Sachar. Nonetheless, Sachar was able to secure 128 student visas. Two of the prospective students, suffering from depression, committed suicide. The rest were brought to the United States and attended universities.²⁶ The most well-known of the students is Representative Tom Lantos of California. A survivor of a forced labor camp north of Budapest, he came to the United States on a Hillel Foundation scholarship and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Washington.

After returning from Washington, D.C., in 1947, Sachar at age forty-eight decided to retire from his position at Hillel and move to Sherman Oaks in the San Fernando Valley. His son David had asthma, and the Sachars hoped that the temperate climate of southern California would help him. Sachar was making his living as a lecturer and writer. In 1948, what amounted to one year of retirement came to an end when Sachar was invited to become the first president of Brandeis University. Eleanor Roosevelt and



Max Lerner of Brandeis University



Representative Tom Lantos, one of 128 Jewish refugees for whom Sachar obtained a student visa to attend school in the United States.

Max Lerner, who spoke to the Hillel Open Forum program, taught at Brandeis. Many other Brandeis faculty were German-Jewish refugees. Sachar served Brandeis University for forty-five years, first as president, then as chancellor and chancellor emeritus. Abram and Thelma Sachar are buried on the Brandeis campus.

Notes

UIA = University of Illinois Archives.

1. Abram Leon Sachar, 1923-1924, University of Illinois Personnel File, 2/5/15-52, UIA.
2. The University's personnel application asked "church affiliations, if any." Sachar wrote "none (Jewish extraction)." Abram Leon Sachar, 1923-1924, University of Illinois Personnel File, UIA.
3. Jonathan Z. S. Pollock, "Jewish Problems: Eastern and Western Jewish Identities in Conflict at the University of Wisconsin, 1919-1941," *American Jewish History*, v. 89, No. 289.2 (June, 2001), 161.
4. Tape-recorded interview with Abram L. Sachar by Faye Sholem, Theodore Hymowitz, and Ann Hymowitz, Chicago, February 2, 1976, Sinai Temple Records, Champaign County Historical Association, Urbana Public Library. The son of the landlady later told Sachar his mother had regretted the "un-Christian" attitude she had taken. Howard Sachar recalled other anti-Semitic incidents in Urbana. In the 1940s Howard, who attended the University Laboratory High School, joined sports teams so that he would be physically prepared to fight the anti-Semitic bullies who taunted him. He also had a French teacher who peppered her instruction with anti-Semitic remarks. Author's interview with Howard Sachar, January 15, 2004.
5. Abram L. Sachar, "The B'nai Brith Hillel Foundations in American Universities," *American Jewish Yearbook*, v. 47 (1945-1946), 141-152.
6. *The Hillel Bulletin*, v. 3, Nono. 8 (February 16, 1928), 1.
7. The founding of Hillel and Sachar's role in its development are described in Winton U. Solberg, "The Early Years of the Jewish Presence at the University of Illinois," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, v. 2, No. 22.2 (Summer, 1992), 215-245.
8. Author's interview with Dr. Howard Sachar, January 15, 2004.
9. *The Hillel Post* (April 21, 1932), 1, 3, UIA.
10. *The Hillel Post* (October 28, 1941), 1, UIA.
11. *The Hillel Post* (October 8, 1937), 1, UIA.
12. Tape-recorded interview with Abram L. Sachar.
13. Pollack, *Jewish Problems*, 176-177.
14. *The Hillel Post* (October 6, 1932), 3, UIA.
15. *The Hillel Post* (October 6, 1932), 3, UIA.
16. *The Hillel Post* (March 18, 1937), 3, UIA.
17. *The Hillel Post* (November 18, 1935), 2, UIA.
18. *The Hillel Post* (November 26, 1941), 3, UIA.
19. *The Hillel Post* (January 18, 1945), 3, UIA.
20. Sinai Temple Annual Meeting, May 28, 1939, September 15, 1943, Sinai Temple Records, Champaign County Historical Archives, Urbana Public Library.
21. Abram Leon Sachar, *Sufferance Is the Badge: The History of Jews in Europe* (New York: Knopf, 1939).
22. *The Hillel Post* (October 8, 1941), 2, UIA.
23. *The Hillel Post* (January 18, 1945), 2, UIA.
24. *The Hillel Post* (April, 1946), 3, UIA.
25. *Champaign-Urbana News-Gazette* (July 7, 1946), Frances Myers Bauer Papers, Box 4, UIA.
26. Tape-recorded interview with Abram L. Sachar.

Julius and Sol Cohen

by Arthur Robinson

For much of the twentieth century, the musical scene in Champaign-Urbana and in its Jewish community was graced by the presence of one or both of two remarkable brothers: Julius and Sol Cohen. Their roots went back to the first Jewish family in the region and to the Jews of eighteenth-century England. Julius and Sol (Solomon Bernstein) were the two younger sons of Nat (Nathan H.) and Addie (Adelaide Bernstein) Cohen. Addie's parents were the first Jewish family in the area, having moved to Urbana in 1854. Nat's father, Simeon, was born in England in 1791. His mother, Simcha Sebag Cohen, Simeon's second wife, was connected with one of the prominent Sephardic families in England. Nat was born in Philadelphia in 1850, and Addie was born in Urbana in 1859.

Nat's family moved to Cincinnati when he was a child. There he was apprenticed to a cigar maker, and there he was discovered to have musical talent, a fine voice, and acting ability. In his early twenties, he went to California and joined an opera company. After two years in California, he moved to Chicago, where his family was then located, and he continued singing and acting. Bad economic times in 1878 led him to return to cigar manufacturing, and he moved to Champaign to work in that trade. Eventually, Nat founded his own factory in Urbana. Not long after Nat arrived in Champaign, he met Addie, who was also musically inclined and who had a good voice. Nat

Julius Cohen, left at piano, and Sol Cohen on violin.



gave her informal instruction, and they appeared in local musical programs. They married in 1880.



The Cohens had three boys: Sydney was born in 1885, Julius in 1888, and Sol in 1891. Nat became a prosperous and well-connected businessman who was active in Republican politics. For many years he was Fish Commissioner for the State of Illinois. The site of his cigar factory was a sizable two-story

building on the northeast corner of Race and Main in Urbana. The building still exists and bears the name Nat H. Cohen and the date 1907 in the terra cotta of the Main Street façade.

The Cohens were founding members of Sinai Temple in 1904. Earlier, in 1894, Addie had formed the Jewish Ladies Social Circle. Its philanthropic and educational activities led to the founding of the Temple Sisterhood and the Federated Jewish Charities (later the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation). The Social

Circle was dissolved after Addie's death in 1943. The Cohen house was often a gathering place for Jewish students at the University in the first



Nat Cohen's cigar factory building at Main and Race in Urbana. Photos of Nat Cohen's factory by Dori Gordon Walker.

decade of the twentieth century, before the founding of the Ivrim Society, the first Jewish club at the University.

In view of the musical interests of the parents, it is not surprising that the Cohen home in Urbana at the southeast corner of Elm and Orchard Streets, 511 W. Elm, was filled with music when the Cohen boys were growing up. The oldest boy, Sydney, had a penchant for business, but the two younger ones, Julius and Sol, displayed musical talent and interest very early. Julius was an excellent pianist and a fine singer; Sol took up the violin and set it down only in his nineties. When Sol was in high school, it was clear to Nat and Addie that he had gained all he could from the locally available instruction. Nat's partner in his California opera days, the brilliant violinist Émile Sauret, was then in Chicago teaching at the Chicago Musical College. Sol went to Chicago to study with Sauret, living with an uncle there. In Sol's last year in high school, he studied at the college on weekends. But Sauret had decided to return to Europe to perform and teach. His successor at the college did not inspire Sol as Sauret had, and the question of study in Europe was raised in the family. In the meantime, Sol had been very successful in performances with visiting orchestras in Urbana and Bloomington. It was at about this time that Sol began to realize that composition as well as performance was his goal.

In 1908 Addie, Sol, and some relatives who wanted to visit Germany took passage to Europe. Sol was to study with Ottokar Ševčík in Prague. It was soon very clear to Sol that his new teacher's single-minded emphasis on technique was not what Sol was looking for. Later that year, when Nat came to Prague to pick up Addie and return, some friends mentioned the possibility of Sol's studying with the noted violinist and composer Jenő Hubay in Budapest. It turned out that Hubay was the perfect teacher for Sol. Somewhat later, Julius joined Sol in Budapest to study with a voice teacher. They both enjoyed the great

musical atmosphere of Budapest, attending operas, concerts, and recitals almost nightly. After two years with Hubay, and with an excellent letter of recommendation and a diploma from the master, Sol was ready to return to America to launch his career. Julius stayed on a little longer to continue his voice studies.

Sol taught for a while in Bloomington, Illinois, and then in 1912 he joined the first violin section of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. In 1913, he was offered a position with the Peoria Musical College. When, in 1917, the United States was about to enter World War I, Sol wished to volunteer. Unfortunately, his eyesight without glasses was much too poor for him to be accepted. Sol's brother Sydney was then a captain training troops in Houston, Texas. Sol traveled to Houston and managed to pass the eye test by memorizing the eye chart.

Sol, serving in Sydney's company, was in military intelligence at the front in France from June 1918 until the end of the war. Not long after returning to Urbana, Sol traveled to Paris to study composition with Max d'Ollone for a year.

Sydney, then living in San Diego, persuaded Sol to move to California in 1921. Sol heard of an opening in the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra, but that orchestra was about to fold in favor of the new Los Angeles Philharmonic. Nevertheless, Sol threw himself into the musical life of the city, and he eventually played with a small group in a new hotel and then in a movie theater. Silent films were accompanied by live musicians—perhaps a piano in a small house, but a fairly large ensemble in the larger theaters. Sol eventually composed for movies and performed as well, all the while teaching some music students privately. Later, Syd and his family moved to Los Angeles, and Sol's growing income helped to purchase a large home that Sol shared with his brother's family. Sol obtained a position with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and often played in small ensembles in the city. There he met Charlie

Chaplin, the modern dancer Ruth St. Denis, and many musicians in the thriving music world of Los Angeles.

In 1924 Sol visited Paris, accompanied for a few months by Julius. The city, and Max d'Ollone, always seemed to inspire Sol musically, especially in composition. Thus recharged, Sol returned to Los Angeles. Nat and Addie spent winters with Sol and Syd in Los Angeles to escape the rigors of the Midwest weather. Their strong voices were welcome additions at many of the musical gatherings that Sol attended. In the winter of 1928, Nat fell ill and died. The next year, with the stock market crash and the onset of the Great Depression, a pall fell over the movie industry and the musical life of Los Angeles.



Edward and Marian MacDowell.

In 1930, Sol toured with the Denis-Shawn dance company as its musical advisor and resident composer, as well as conductor. At about that time, Sol met the widow of the composer Edward MacDowell. She was impressed by his compositions and playing, and this led to an invitation to join the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire, where creative artists could pursue their crafts for an uninterrupted summer in stimulating company. For several summers, Sol enjoyed the company of poets of the caliber of Edward Arlington Robinson and William Rose Benet, and of composers such as Aaron Copland, Charles Cadman, and Lucas Foss.

It was at the MacDowell Colony that Sol had the leisure to compose many pieces for brass and woodwinds, which turned out to be very useful in his later teaching. Sol was receiving royalties for these pieces until his death. Those delightful summers also gave Sol the opportunity to collect and write his memoirs, which form most of the text of *Years of Pilgrimage: Memoirs of an American Musician* (The Mayfair Press, Champaign, Illinois, 1982).

In the 1930s, Sol moved back to Urbana to live briefly with Julius and their mother in the house where Sol was born. After teaching at Champaign High School for some time, he took positions at private schools in many parts of the country. From 1961 to 1981, he was music director every summer at Crystal Lake Camp in Hughesville, Pennsylvania.

In the early 1960s Sol returned to the house on Elm Street, where he continued to have students into his nineties. Here he often directed musicals put on by the Temple Sisterhood as fund-raisers, some of these involving most of the community in performing music, singing, scenery construction, and publicity. Sol and Julius often performed together, and Sol played in the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra until 1973. Musical visitors to Champaign-Urbana would often stop by the house on Elm Street to visit the two brothers.

He [Julius] was one of the few who could coax music out of the old pipe organ in the old Temple at Clark and State Streets in Champaign.

While Sol was in California and teaching in various schools for 30 years, Julius stayed closer to home. As a voice teacher, he had many talented students, some of whom gained international acclaim. Many of his neighbors would gather on their porches in mild weather to enjoy the

lessons with his better students. Julius was very active in Sinai Temple, serving as Music Director for many years. He was one of the few who could coax music out of the old pipe organ in the old Temple at Clark and State Streets in Champaign. Some of the keys did not work, but Julius could readily rearrange the music to avoid the unresponsive keys. Julius trained volunteer choirs, and often sang himself, especially on the High Holy Days. His bass voice rendition of *Kadosh Ata* on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur was unforgettable.

Julius also composed words and music and wrote poetry. A collection of his poems was published in Urbana in 1959 as *Far-Off Whistles*. The title poem is engraved on a brass plaque in Sinai Temple's Julius Cohen Garden, which was dedicated to commemorate Julius after his death in 1973.

Sol was slowed down by a serious stroke in the early 1980s, but he recovered well enough to enjoy most of his remaining years. The publication of his book in 1982 was a source of great joy to him, as well as a source of some helpful income. When he was presented with the first bound copy of *Years of Pilgrimage*, he exclaimed, "I have read thousands of books, and now I have written one!" He would spend hours signing books for friends, acquaintances, and strangers, heedless of advice to rest for a while. The book may have added years to his life; it certainly added life to his years.

The Sol Cohen Award was established in the 1980s to identify young performers, and Sol was honored at a special performance of the Champaign-Urbana Symphony.

Sol died in September 1988 at age 97. At his 95th birthday party, he asked all present to help him celebrate his 100th birthday. January 11, 1991, was designated Sol Cohen Day by proclamation of the mayors of Urbana and Champaign. A birthday party was held at Helen Levin's home in Champaign to celebrate the 100th anniversary of his birth to honor Sol's request of five years before.



Above: Ezra Levin
Right: The Levin women
at home (from left, Emily,
Helen, Susan, and Judy).



A Message from Ezra Levin: A Statement of Principles (June 1972)

From Article II: Purpose, Constitution of Sinai Temple:

"Its purpose shall be to worship God in accordance with the faith of Israel; to cultivate a love and understanding of the Jewish heritage; to stimulate fellowship in the Jewish community and to strengthen bonds of loyalty with the Jewish people everywhere; to bring near the kingdom of God on earth through an emphasis of the principles of righteousness and brotherhood in society at large."

Sinai Congregation is a unique group. We represent all shades of religious feeling within the Jewish tradition. Our membership is made up of many types of persons. Most of us have a deep feeling for Jewish spiritual values. We are proud of our Jewish heritage for what it has given to the world for many centuries, proud of our leadership in maintaining human rights and the dignity of man.

But beyond these basic feelings, we differ widely. We are a Reform Jewish Congregation. But, what is "Reform" today? What is "Orthodox" or "Conservative"? Interpretation is difficult since the terms mean different things to different people depending upon their own background and the extent of their Jewish education.

Yet, with all our differences, we are identical—each of us with each other. We are Jews. We are a minority ethnic group. If and when (we pray not) a crisis should arise that would involve us as a distinct Jewish entity we will find that we need each other. No matter how we may differ in the details of our ritual, our educational values, and our leadership, we do react as one when a threat to the Jewish people arises.

We should agree that criticism of our Service or Sunday School should not be of a nature to cause deep resentment by any one of our Congregation. Those who believe in strictly Reform practices should be flexible and yield to our unified

ethnic purpose. Those who have deep feeling for the Orthodox practice should yield in their traditional compulsions. The simple conclusion is that our community is too small to be divided. If we are to survive both as a Congregation and as a People, we must stand together—united—against all those forces which would destroy us, both from without and from within.

We specifically reject that our relationship to our Congregation and our Jewish tradition is inflexible. We believe that the Jewish faith is as flexible as it is dynamic.

A committee will be available to consider any criticism of Congregation policy by any member. If it cannot be resolved by the committee the matter can be presented to the Board for final action, so that individual resentment and bitterness are not allowed to develop out of proportion to their significance.

Our purpose is to “Hold hands together” and let nothing pull us apart. We need each other. Our children need each other.

We pledge, each one of us, not to permit some difference of feeling between us to separate us.

By Ezra Levin

For Board of Trustees, Sinai Temple, June 1972

Ezra Levin served as president of Sinai Temple from 1951–1952.

At right: Custom-made ark doors designed by artist and member Rosalind Faiman Weinberg and constructed by John Johnson in 2003. They were donated by Helen Levin, widow of Ezra Levin, in memory of their daughter Judy. The four panels are veneered white rift-sawn oak, and approximately 18 exotic woods were used in the inlay and veneered construction. The symbolic meaning of the doors has been described by Cecile Lebenson, co-chair of the Arts and Acquisitions committee: “The central motif is a *Ner Tamid* (an Eternal Light) being licked by flames which alternately take on an aspect of the silent Hebrew letter *aleph*, of numerical value ONE, and of the Hebrew letter *yod*, of numerical value TEN. The descending motif of inlaid wood on either side of the *Ner Tamid* is 18 in number and represents the fringes of a prayer shawl. Eighteen, written in Hebrew, means ‘life.’ It expresses the Jewish affirmation of life in the face of tragedy and death that the letters *yod* and *aleph* bring to us. The ascending fringes in quarter circle, also 18 in number on either side of the base, represent a Jerusalem study house composed of books. Hence, though the flames are heavenward and mystical, the base is firmly rooted in tradition and earthly matters” (*Sinai Temple Bulletin*, August 2003). Photo by Benjamin Halpern.



Part IV



Sinai Temple Consecration Class
of 1957.

Top row, left to right: Rob Silverman, Dan Brodsky, Corky Schmidt, Chuck Schwartz, Cheryl Shmikler, Judith Eisen, Arna Leavitt.

Middle row: Diane Weissman, Tom Weissman, Harriet Scharf, Dan Gusfield, unidentified girl and boy.

Bottom row: Rudofsky girl, Susan Hamburg, Anne Goodman, Ted Kurland, Louie Steinberg.

*Reminiscences
and Reflections*

"Memory is a way of holding onto the things you love, the things you are, the things you never want to lose."

—From the television show "The Wonder Years"

SOME OF OUR STORIES

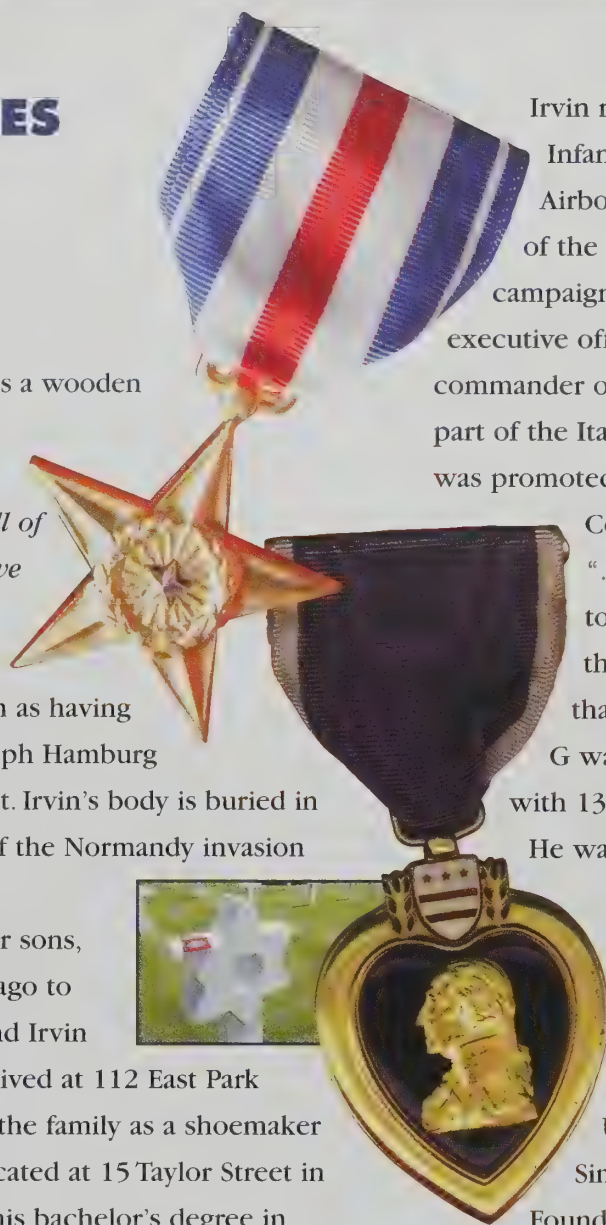
Captain Irvin Bloom

by Allen Avner

Among the archives of Sinai Temple is a wooden plaque bearing the title *With Strength and Courage Shall a Nation Be Molded to Last: Roll Call of Jewish Members of Our Community Who Serve Our Country in World War II*. Three of the 55 names listed on the plaque—Irvin Bloom, John Dooley, and Joseph Hamburg—are shown as having been wounded in battle. John Dooley and Joseph Hamburg survived their wounds, but Irvin Bloom did not. Irvin's body is buried in the Normandy American Cemetery near one of the Normandy invasion beaches.

Robert and Tillie Leibovitz Bloom and their sons, Edward, Irvin, and Marshall, moved from Chicago to Champaign in the mid-1930s while Edward and Irvin attended the University of Illinois. The family lived at 112 East Park Avenue in Champaign, and Robert supported the family as a shoemaker from his shop ("Modern Shoe Rebuilders") located at 15 Taylor Street in Champaign. Edward, the oldest son, received his bachelor's degree in 1936 and his master's degree in 1939. Irvin received his bachelor's degree in 1940.

With the beginning of World War II, both Edward and Irvin Bloom joined the Army. Their parents moved from Champaign to Kankakee around 1942.



Irvin received a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry and volunteered for service in the newly formed 82nd Airborne Division, where he was assigned to the 2nd Battalion of the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment. Before the North African campaign he was promoted to First Lieutenant and assigned as executive officer of Company F. In North Africa he became acting commander of Company F and served in that role through the early part of the Italian campaign. Shortly before the Normandy invasion he was promoted to Captain and took over as commanding officer of Company G. A fellow officer, Joe Gault,¹ recalled that Irvin "...was a good officer. He knew how to handle his men and told a good Jewish joke...the men loved him..." Losses for the 82nd Airborne units were heavy in the fierce fighting that followed the invasion. Joe Gault reported that "Company G was down to 3 men at one time and went back to England with 13 men..." Captain Irvin Bloom was killed on June 9, 1944. He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and Silver Star.

Following the war, Edward Alan Bloom returned to Champaign and the University of Illinois, where he earned his PhD in 1947. He was later a professor of English at Brown University and was a 1969 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow. Edward retired to California, where he died in 1994.

At right: F Company officers from left to right are Lt. Irvin Bloom, Lt. Joe Gault, and Lt. Harold Hahn. Photo found at <http://www.325glider.org/id21.html>

¹Joe Gault, 325th Glider Infantry Association Web Page <http://www.geocities.com/glidertroop325/gault.html>





Louie Brown, "The Flying Hebrew," in his Illini Special No. 5.
Photos courtesy of Rob Silverman.

The Flying Hebrew

by Robert Silverman



Benjamin
Brown

My grandfather on my mother's side, Benjamin Brown, first shows up in the Champaign-Urbana telephone directory in 1908. Benjamin Barak (Brown), my grandfather, left Kiev, Russia, in the late 1890s. Miriam (known as Mary Ann in America), my grandmother and Benjamin's wife, was seventeen when she left separately, carrying Harry, their infant son. As told to me by my aunt, Miriam traveled over rough territory without her husband and accepted shelter from a group of "lovely ladies," a move she would later laugh about, not realizing then that she and Harry were being cared for by the women of a brothel. She met up with Benjamin in New York City, and later they came to Urbana.

The family name of Brown, like many Jewish names of the time, is not the real one, which was Barak. The name, for unknown reasons, was changed, like that of many Jewish immigrants.

The Browns and their ten children lived in the big, red brick house still standing at 506 University Avenue in Champaign. My mother and many of my aunts and uncles were born at Mercy Hospital (now Provena) in Urbana. Many of them are buried in the Jewish section at Champaign's Mount Hope cemetery.

Another family story is that Miriam was known on the hobo circuit, feeding those passing through the area who would know to walk to their house from the Illinois Central railroad station a few blocks to the west. Family lore says that she would invite the travelers in and feed them at

her table—and that she would bake pies and leave them on the windowsill, off which the hobos would take them.

The sons were said to be pretty wild. During Prohibition, as the family story goes, they had two hot-water heaters, one filled with water, the other with gin. Neighbors lined up at the door, empty milk bottles in hand. Harry was an expert bridge player and gambler, making his living off cards and horses, in addition to working in the metals business.

Morris was a bail bondsman, who once bailed Marilyn Monroe out of jail, and he shows up in the index of one of her biographies, which I have seen but the title of which I can't remember. According to family history, Morris drove the first truckload of beer into Champaign when Prohibition ended, but attempts to verify this story failed. Morris also was in the family metals trade, although the nomenclature used then was "junkyard." The Brown junkyard was located at 720 N. Market. Astute readers will recognize this address as being the one-time site of the Community Recycling Center. Louie was a race-car driver, a professional on the circuit, sponsored by Montgomery Ward. Paul and Gatz were mechanics, and together they formed a racing team, building their own cars. Louie, known in the racing world as "The Flying Hebrew," died in a crash at Savannah, Georgia, in 1936.

The daughters in the Brown family were also born in Urbana, but spent many years in Chicago. Harvey Corman, the not-yet-famous actor, had a "crush" on Beverly. Helen joined the Army; she eventually lived with

**They had two hot
water heaters...
one filled with
water, the other
with gin.**

my Uncle Ralph, who made his living as a coin dealer and professional gambler. Loretta (Lottie) studied voice, performed Carmen with the American Opera of Chicago, and moved to New York to sing. Rose married at fifteen and became a Chicago photographer. And my own mother, Dorothy, born January 29, 1917 at Urbana's Mercy Hospital, died October 22, 1983 at the same hospital, and is now buried at Mount Hope. Before marrying my father, my mother once went out on a date with Al Capone's brother. She told me she was picked up in a big, black limousine. Luckily for me, things didn't work out between them. I don't much like the sound of Robbie Capone.

My grandparents on mother's side were part of the conservative *shul*. I remember attending some kind of service above the Commercial Bank in downtown Champaign. The bank was torn down long ago, and is now the location of the Champaign Police Department.

I mostly remember attending services at Sinai on Clark Street in downtown Champaign. The Sunday School classrooms were in the red brick building next to the synagogue. At the time, I had one close Jewish friend. Neither of us liked Sunday School and he and I would sometimes go downtown to Kresge's Five and Dime store. We would get cherry Cokes and walk around downtown before going back to Sinai.

Following the Sinai Temple fire, my father, Charles Silverman, as the Board president at that time, was faced with the challenge of starting to gather the information that could lead to an informed decision by the Congregation on whether to rebuild in downtown Champaign or to use the previously purchased site on Windsor Road. I am proud of his leadership and service to the Temple during this critical period.

Growing Up Jewish and Female in Champaign-Urbana

by Jewel Kurland

My grandfather, Morris Zimmerman, was a soldier in the Czar's Army and had a reputation of being a sharpshooter. Fearing that war with Japan was imminent, he escaped from Russia in 1904. He was denied entry into the United States because of an eye infection, so he immigrated to Canada instead. After a few years, he was able to bring my grandmother, Mathlia, and her one-year-old daughter, Sadye (my mother), to join him in Canada. The family lived in Canada for five years, but my grandfather could not cope with the harsh winters, so the family moved to Chicago.

Three years later, at a family gathering in Chicago, my grandparents were introduced to cousins visiting from Champaign, Illinois, the Hamburgs. They urged him to come to Champaign where he and his family would have a better life. The family moved to Champaign in 1912.

My mother, Sadye, started school in Champaign in the fourth grade. This was very difficult for her because she knew only Yiddish, but she was able to learn English quickly. She attended Champaign High School and later the University of Illinois. At that time, Sinai Temple on Clark Street was being built, so mother attended Sunday school in a local church.

My mother met my father, Jack Marco, on a blind date arranged by their families at a Chicago White Sox game. A short time later, in 1926, they were married at the Odd Fellows Hall in downtown Champaign

across from the City Building. My grandmother went to Kresge's Dime Store and purchased the entire supply of silverware and china for the strictly kosher wedding. After the honeymoon in St. Louis, my parents resided in Champaign. My father worked with my grandfather in the scrap company, then called the Champaign Junk Company, which my grandfather owned. Later it became the Marco Steel Company.

My first home was at 715 Arlington Court in Champaign. My grandparents and my Uncle Ted (my mother's brother) lived at 717 Arlington Court. It was wonderful living so close to our extended family. Six years

later my younger sister Shirley was born.

When my parents and grandparents didn't want me to understand what they were talking about, they would speak in Yiddish. Needless to say, I learned Yiddish very quickly, and a portion of the language still remains with me today.

I attended Southside Elementary School, and my only Jewish classmate was Reatha Hamburg. I was involved in the usual activities: Brownies, Girl

Scouts, and piano lessons. The celebration of Christmas in school didn't seem to be as much of a problem as it is with parents today. I badgered my mother about the fact that I was the only person in my class who didn't bring a Christmas ornament to class. Finally she gave in and purchased a Christmas tree ornament for me to take to school. In no way did this affect my Jewish identity—I had no desire to have a Christmas tree.

In Champaign-Urbana, at that time, there was the Sinai Temple and the B'nai Israel (an Orthodox congregation). Children from both congre-



Jewel Marco (Kurland), left, with her grandparents, Morris and Mathlia Zimmerman, and mother (Sadye Zimmerman Marco).

gations attended Sinai Temple Sunday School at the old Temple on Clark Street. The teachers were mostly college students, which included the Koller girls: Edna, Elizabeth, and Ruth (Ruth Berkson). The teachers would collect coins from the students to be used for planting trees in Israel. My confirmation class consisted of three students: Reatha Hamburg (Ben and Florence Hamburg's daughter and Joyce H. Levy's older sister), Leonard Davis (son of Julius and Jeanette Davis, whose family operated a grocery store that provided kosher foods, and nephew to Edythe and Cecil Davis), and me. Rabbi Judah Goldin officiated.

My parents had a Sunday School carpool with Dr. Sachar's family, who lived on our block. Whenever we were in the car together their son, Howard, would duck every time a car would drive by: he didn't want to be seen with a girl—that did a lot for my ego.

The Sisterhood provided all the funds for the upkeep of the Sunday School. There were two women from the Sinai Temple Sisterhood



At left, Sinai Temple confirmation class of 1937: Pictured, from left to right, are Robert Simon, Stanley Greenman, Max Simon, Dorothy Simon, unidentified young woman, Aaron Baker, Marajen Newman, Sidney Baker, Myron Sholem, and Eugene Stern.



Jewel Kurland, right, sharing a step with her grandmother, Mathlia Zimmerman.

At left, Gene (Eugene) Stern's 1937 Certificate of Confirmation, signed by Martin Perley, rabbi; Charles Loeb, Sinai secretary; Leonard Lewis, Sinai president; and Abram Sachar, director.

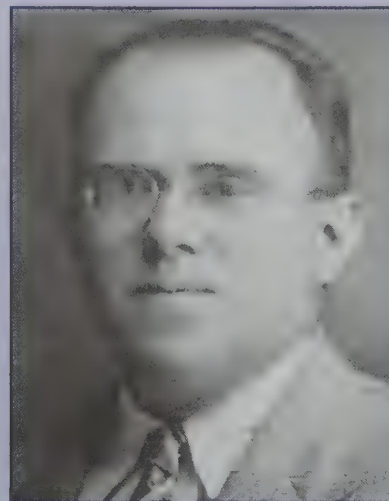
who would visit our Sunday School every week. One of these women was Mrs. Hattie Kaufman, who was a very stately, elegant woman. She would visit each class during Sunday School. She also accompanied us on the piano during our assemblies. The other woman was Mrs. Bernice Lewis. When Arthur Lewis spoke of his mother Bernice, it reminded me of her frequent visits to Sunday School. Mrs. Lewis was a saintly woman in the real sense of the word. Though her body may have been frail, she had a very strong commitment to the Sunday School and to Hadassah. Mrs. Lewis would greet us and remind us to give tzedakah. Both Mrs. Kaufman and Mrs. Lewis left quite an impression on me.

A very dear memory of mine relates to the Cohen brothers (not the ones in Hollywood), Sol on the violin and Julius at the piano; they accompanied our Sunday morning services at Sinai Temple. I shall never forget the talent and personality of these two charming men. They will always be a part of the musical history of Sinai Temple. You might be interested to know there is a book in our Temple Library, authored by Sol Cohen, that gives the early history of Champaign-Urbana Jews.

As I mentioned, there were two Jewish congregations in Champaign-Urbana. Sinai Temple was founded by Reform German Jews. The other congregation, B'nai Israel, located in a home on the corner of Third and White Streets in Champaign, was founded primarily by Russian Jews. The building was three blocks away from what was formerly Steak and Shake. I remember it well; during Yom Kippur services while our parents were fasting during the all-day service, the kids would leave the service at noon and hurry over to Steak and Shake for YOU KNOW WHAT!!!

I enjoyed participating in the shul activities. During services the older women sat at a long table: some used prayer books written in Yiddish while others used the Hebrew text. There was a lovely tradition in B'nai Israel during the High Holy Days. At the conclusion of the service, flowers would arrive for the women from their families.

My grandfather, Morris Zimmerman, was the president of the congregation of B'nai Israel for twenty years. Rabbi Kaplan was the rabbi and *shochet*—the man who saw to it that the meat and the chickens were killed in the proper kosher manner.



Dr. Armin Koller, professor of German at the University of Illinois.

Dr. Armin Koller, a German professor at the University of Illinois and the father of Ruth Berkson, assisted the Rabbi during services. We were so very proud that Dr. and Mrs. Koller were part of our congregation. During the 1930s and 1940s very few Jewish faculty at the University of Illinois identified with Jewish congregations. As I remember, it was Professor Simon Litman at Sinai and Dr. Koller at B'nai Israel who identified themselves as Jews.

I went to B'nai Israel Hebrew School twice a week. We would practice our Hebrew by reading the prayers used during traditional services. These prayers have stayed with me these many years. We were taught Yiddish by reading a Yiddish newspaper called *The Forward*. The column we read from was called "The Bintel Brief"; it was the forerunner of "Dear Abby." Many a time when my grandfather wanted to make a point with me, he would tell a story from the "Bintel Brief."

I enjoyed going to the shul. It was noisy at times with people coming and going, but it was fun visiting with my parents' friends. We used to walk to services during High Holy Days. Mrs. Sachar's mother, Mrs. Horowitz, would accompany us. The Sachars attended services at Sinai. The two congregations rarely socialized. Even business was more or less segregated. The Kuhns, Kaufmans, and Lewises had stores in downtown



Handmade brass eternal light purchased in 1964 from local artist Laura Lees before she made *aliyah* to Israel. The *ner tamid* was rescued from the Clark Street Temple after the fire, and now hangs in the Levin Lounge.

Champaign, while the Greenman brothers, Davis brothers, and the Sharinskys had stores on the east side of University Avenue.

I graduated from University High School and entered the University of Illinois the following fall; I was called a "town girl" or a "townie." Since I had so few Jewish friends, I joined a Jewish sorority, Phi Sigma Sigma. I joined Hillel and soon was invited to be on their Board. During the Israeli 1948 war, I went to the Greek and independent houses trying to raise money for the Israel Relief Fund. We did this by showing films of what was happening in Israel. After showing the film, I would ask for donations for Israel.

My parents, by their example, instilled in me the responsibility to help our less fortunate brethren and to speak out in defense of Judaism whenever necessary. My parents were activists. My father was very involved in all Jewish activities: he was president of the Hillel Board, B'nai B'rith, and United Jewish Appeal. He was very good at raising money for various Jewish and non-Jewish groups. He was one of the founders of the Frances Nelson Home. He was chairman of a Bob Hope

show to raise money for cerebral palsy; he was also a strong supporter of the University of Illinois. These are just a few of the many groups he supported.

When need be, my father was very positive about his Jewishness. I had an incident at University High School, where a French teacher said in class that "Jews were obnoxious." My father wasted little time. He was in the principal's office that afternoon, and an apology was given to me later that day. For these noble qualities Jew and non-Jew alike respected him. My dad had a lot of friends, Jewish and non-Jewish. He was invited to join the Champaign Country Club. At first he was hesitant, but his friends insisted, so he joined.

My mother was a member of Sinai Sisterhood, League of Women Voters, and the Mathlia Zimmerman Auxiliary. In her younger years, she marched with her mother for women's suffrage. But her great love (besides my sister and me, of course) was Hadassah. Let me give a quick Champaign-Urbana Hadassah history, as told to me by my mother. A small group of women in Sisterhood, learning of the humanitarian work of Hadassah and the sympathy to Israel, decided to ask the Sisterhood to allow Hadassah to be under the Sisterhood umbrella. Bernice Lewis, the leader of the Hadassah, was chosen to be spokeswoman. The Sisterhood refused their request because Zionism was not recognized by the Reform movement at the time. The Temple could not be used to raise money for Israel. The group of women led by Bernice Lewis decided to form their own chapter. In 1934, they started the Champaign-Urbana Chapter of Hadassah. The president was Bernice Lewis and the Secretary-Treasurer was Sadye Marco (my mother), who later became the third president of the chapter. Other members of the group were Mrs. Koller and her daughter Ruth, Mathlia Zimmerman (my grandmother), Ann Gluskoter and her mother Mrs. Pierce, and Mrs. Sachar and her mother Mrs. Horowitz. From that time on, cakes and pies in our kitchen

Aaron and Jewel Kurland
Below: Sadye Marco (left) with
her daughter Jewel Kurland.



were off limits because they had a higher calling: Hadassah, Sisterhood, or B'nai Israel Auxiliary!

During the 1967 war, when my husband, Aaron Kurland, was president of United Jewish Appeal, he was given permission to invite Rubin Cohn, a renowned professor of law and a strong supporter of Israel, to speak on Israel's behalf. This began the first fund-raising appeal for Israel at Sinai Temple.

I had a great childhood; I was most fortunate to have loving and caring parents and grandparents. I hope that I have profited by their teachings and I pray that I have passed their fine qualities onto my children and grandchildren, the next Jewish generations.



Memories

by Joyce Libman Tavill



Clarence (Cuppy) and Adele Libman moved to Champaign when I was two years old. That was 1940. Both my parents were born and raised in Orthodox homes in Chicago, moving to central Illinois in the early 1930s. They joined Sinai Temple and raised their three children in those caring, challenging, stimulating, and intellectual arms. Memories of the synagogue and the education it gave me are a permanent part of whom I became. So bear with me as I give you a peek into my Sinai snapshots.

Soon after moving to Champaign, my mother was called on socially by a Sinai congregant, who in the course of conversation asked her not to keep kosher because that was too Jewish. (Yes, times have changed—thank G_d.)

Mother's answer was, "Thank you for visiting." And we continued observing *kasbrut* at home. I tell you this to give you a further glimpse into the German Reform Jewish world at that time.

I think my mother decided then that the best way to teach Judaism was to help students live it. So she became involved in the Sunday School and did become the head of the school. Whether she was the first principal or not is less relevant than what she did. And what she did was buy books and supplies for all the kids when the synagogue budget wouldn't allow. She made hamantaschen for the entire school on Purim. She instituted model mini-Seders in Sunday School, foods and all. We had apples and honey on Rosh Hashanah, groggers on Purim, and so on—nothing new to us today, but revolutionary in Reform synagogues in the 1940s.

She knew the initial way to create bonds to Judaism was through love, holidays, and—always—great food. She did all, unsparingly. Her goal for all the kids was that we would remain strongly, warmly, and actively Jewish.

The Sunday School academics were left to giants in that area: Ezra Levin, Marvin and Esther Steinberg, and many others of their ilk. They taught, they cajoled, they were forces that most of us recognized at the



Rabbi Martin poses with the Bar Mitzvah, Robert Libman.

time. Today many of us would acknowledge their very positive impact on us throughout our lives.

The women of Sinai Temple were bright, gracious, and well and thoughtfully spoken, deserving of special mention for the role models they always were: Ruth Berkson, Helen Levin, Norma Lewis, Leonore Lewis, Rose Kuhn, Ida Klorfine, Lena Garber, Merle Hamburg, Alice Shmikler, Bertha Tanner, Sadye Marco—I could go on and on.

The Rabbis—oh, my—how wonderful to grow up in a university town that attracted the cream of the rabbinic crop! Herman Schaalman, James Rudin, and Bernard Martin (of blessed memory) were but a few. Rabbi Martin was “my” rabbi. He bat mitzvahed me—yes, I was the first-ever bat mitzvah in Champaign (1951). My bat mitzvah was on Shabbat (Friday night) during Pesach. After services, my Torah portion and speech, my parents had an Oneg Shabbat in my honor. They brought the pastries and other items in from Barton's in New York so that everything would be Kosher l'Pesach. They set a standard by acknowledging the appropriate Jewish dietary thing to do, and I know Rabbi Martin appreciated that



Clarence “Cuppy” and Adele Libman host an Oneg Shabbat, after Bill’s bar mitzvah. Son Bill stands between his parents as the punch is served.



Confirmation class of 1958. Standing left to right: Joyce Landa, Mark Sapoznik, Bob Greenstein, Robert Libman, Stephen Hamburg, Barbara Stern. Sitting left to right: Susan Kessler, Rabbi Henry Cohen, Carol Brill. Center floor: Bonnie Lewis.

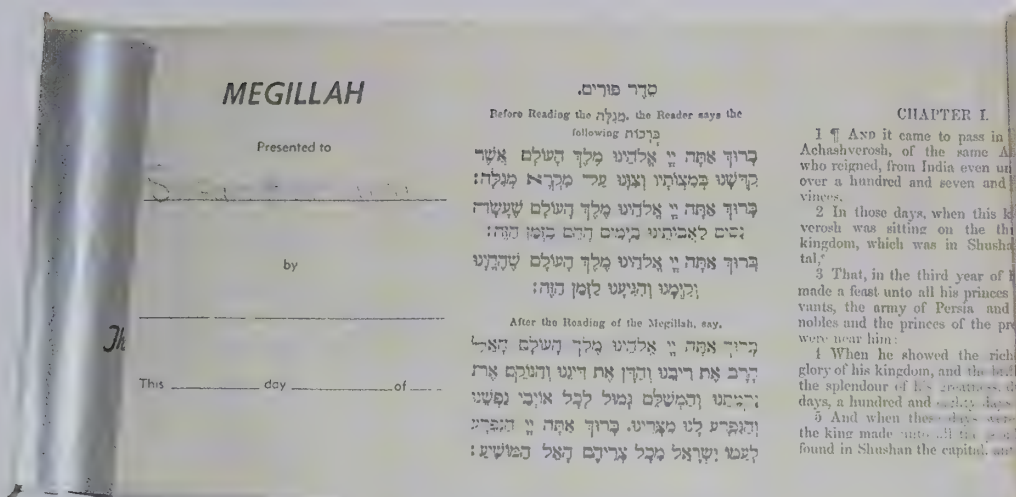
because he was one of three rabbis in the United States ordained in Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism. Rabbi Martin also confirmed me (1954); married me (1959) to my first husband, Bernard (of blessed memory); buried (1961) my beloved Unkie, my mother’s brother, Alex. Yes, he “stayed” with our family after he left Sinai Temple, having gone on to pulpits in Minneapolis, then Chicago, and finally to the Abba Hillel Silver Chair at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. He died suddenly, when he was 54, leaving his widow, Nancy, and two children. He was brilliant, articulate, and authentic. I still miss him.

Of course, this snapshot wouldn’t be complete without my acknowledging the Jewish kids my age (or thereabouts) who shared all of this: Reva and Glenda Shmikler, Mickey and Bonnie Lewis, the Levin sisters, the Berkson kids, Eddie and Trudie Tepper, the Klorfine sisters, Steve Hamburg, my cousins Wilma (of blessed memory) and Butch Libman, and my brothers, Bill and Bob. Not many of us—in fact, so few, that we almost had a “public” Jewishness and a “private” one. How supportive to have experienced the growth of our Jewishness together.

This is a glimpse into my Sinai memories. I hope it puts Sinai Temple today into somewhat of a historical perspective. My best wishes to you all for continued Jewish growth, knowledge, commitment, and actions.

Childhood Tales from the Ark Side

by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin



My earliest, most vivid memories of childhood are of my experiences at Sinai Temple. The year is 1955, and I am four years old. I'm seated at a long table in the vestry room drinking ersatz wine, AKA Welch's grape juice, from a small paper cup.

Bernard Martin was Sinai Temple's rabbi in the early 50s, and was the rabbi who officiated at my consecration service in 1957. The Sunday School had about 75 students in all, and about a quarter of that number was made up of the children in my class. Most Sunday mornings at Sinai Temple were spent listening to stories about the more prominent figures in the Torah and coloring pictures.

During the year, we would participate in activities related to the current Jewish holidays. We were introduced to the genuine articles associated with each celebration. I can remember watching one of the Berkson boys blow the shofar, smelling the esrog and waving the lulav, and dipping parsley into salt water. All of these experiences were reinforced in my home, and I grew up loving our culture. But, the most important holiday, Shabbat, was taught to us as well, and we learned the prayer for lighting the candles, a prayer for blessing the wine, and the motzi.

As we began to prepare for our consecration in earnest, we learned that we would be expected to recite the *Shema* from memory. I don't have a distinct recollection of the consecration service per se, but I remember receiving a gift from the Temple. Each of us was presented with a long, blue box that held what I thought was a "real" Torah. In actuality, it was a scroll of the story of Esther, but I was so proud of it. It looked just like the real Torahs I would see on Friday nights when the rabbi would open the doors of the magnificent ark. It was an "awesome" experience, in the original sense of the word.

Rabbi Henry Cohen became the successor to Rabbi Martin in 1958, and he is the first rabbi with whom I had a relationship. I loved Rabbi Cohen. Soon after he arrived on the scene, a children's choir was organized, and it was at this time that Julius Cohen came into my life. Julius was going to be our choir director, and he insisted we call him Julius...not Mr. Cohen.

Julius had Lake Wobegon beat by a long shot. To him, we were all above average, and we all had beautiful voices. Julius's mission was to get our group into shape so we could sing at one service a month. The piano Julius played in accompaniment to our voices was habitually out of tune just a bit, but it didn't seem to bother anyone, including Julius.

I will never forget how exciting it was to stand in the choir loft, high above the *bimah*, and look out into a sea of friendly, kvelling faces. What utter power! All eyes were on us. Julius had pushed and flipped all of the appropriate buttons and toggle switches on the organ, and our bodies were vibrating with the low-toned hum emanating from the mammoth pipes above us. Then, with a nod of his head, he would begin the intro of the song. The man perspired as his fingers and toes danced in perpetual motion on the keys and pedals. I'm not sure any of the congregants could hear our voices over that organ, but we were pumped! When the last chord was played, Julius would hold it for a few seconds longer, and then nod for us to sit down.

There must have been ten or twelve of us in the children's choir, and the loft was small. We were stuffed into that hot little space like sardines, but when seated, we couldn't be seen by the congregation. We had to be totally quiet so as not to disrupt the service going on beneath us, so out of necessity, we learned to laugh heartily without making a sound. The really difficult part was getting up again to sing the next song because our feet had fallen asleep.

During one particularly humorous choir adventure in 1959, I wore a new dress that Mom had sewn for me. (Mom made all of my clothes, and somehow she had convinced me that it was much more prestigious to wear clothes sewn by one's mother than it was to wear clothes that you had to buy in the department store. This was from the woman who also convinced me that having hair on my arms meant that I was going to be rich. Man, she was good!) Well, back to that Friday night in 1959. We had sung our first song, and dutifully sat down in our cramped quarters. The next thing I know, I'm hearing a tearing sound, and every few seconds, I'm feeling a cool draft down my back. It turns out that the little boy behind me, probably Chuckie Schwartz or Robbie Silverman, had discovered that my dress did not have a zipper or buttons, and he just

had to see how it stayed closed in back. It turns out that Velcro® had just become available in fabric shops, and Mom had used it as the closure for my new dress. It was the first time this boy had ever seen it. When we stood up for the next song, my dress almost fell off.

One especially memorable happening in my Jewish upbringing had nothing to do with Sinai at all, but it served to reinforce in me just how comfortable I was in a Reform service in general and Sinai Temple in particular. I was invited by the Weisels to attend a service at Hillel on campus. I'm pretty sure I was no more than eight or nine years old. To the best of my recollection, not a word of English was spoken during the entire service. Looking back, the English words I missed most that day were: "Please stand." and "You may be seated." From the outset, I made up my mind to simply do what everyone else was doing. During one particularly long prayer, everyone rose in unison, prayerbooks in hand. It was a silent prayer, and each congregant, as I discovered later, was to sit down when he or she had finished the prayer. Staring at the Hebrew in my book, I must have drifted off because when I finally looked up to see what was going on, I was the only one left standing. I was mortified. So many worshippers had patiently waited for heaven-knows-how-long for one little girl to finish praying before continuing. In retrospect, it was one of the kindest gestures I've ever experienced.

Finally, I have some recollections of Rabbi James Rudin whose tenure ran from 1964 through my confirmation in 1968.



Rabbi Rudin may have been more difficult to get to know than some of our other rabbis, but he was a man of principles and integrity above all else. He came to Sinai Temple at a tumultuous time in America's political and social life. He weathered the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, and campus unrest. It was a terrible time to teach teenagers. We were much more independent than our predecessors and much less respectful to those in authority. He served as an exemplary role model for Sinai's congregants, no matter what their age, by involving himself and the Temple in activities arranged to promote equal housing rights and employment opportunities for our black neighbors, by speaking out against U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and by beginning his efforts to counter the campus recruiting techniques of religious cults. He was ultimately asked by our Board to reduce his extracongregational activities, but I will always feel that he was right and righteous. Rabbi Rudin was always able to demonstrate to our confirmation class that these endeavors were totally compatible with Jewish ethics.

Rudin's contributions to the congregation had a huge impact on my life and on who I became as a woman, a Jew, and an American. For our confirmation service, each of us was to choose between reading an already-prepared statement and writing an original piece to read. During the service, I read the canned statement the Rabbi had given me weeks before. Afterward, as Rabbi Rudin was congratulating me, he said, "Susan, you disappointed me today. Out of this class of confirmands, I thought you would be one to compose your own statement, and not take the easy way out." Obviously, I've never forgotten that I let him down, but I've never since been accused of taking the easy way out. As a matter of fact, at the age of 20, I made the unorthodox and difficult decision to become engaged to a man who had been a Roman Catholic priest, but who was studying to become a physician. I wanted Rabbi Rudin to marry us, so I wrote him a letter requesting his services. Rudin

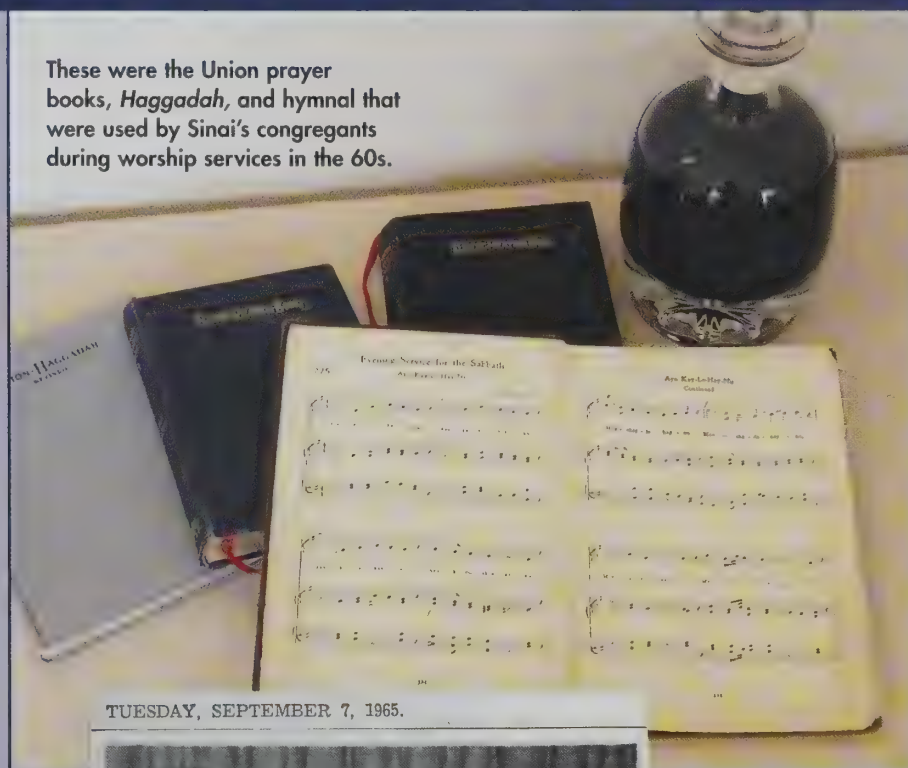
graciously declined, wishing us the best, but stating that he could not, in good conscience, perform an interfaith marriage. I couldn't have respected him any more than I did the day I received his response.

I have so many more memories of Sunday School and events at Sinai Temple while I was a child and into my teen years, but it is my sincere hope that the ones I've described here bring back some warm, or humorous reminiscences for others in the congregation.



The Hamburg children posed in front of their home at 1008 N. Neil Street before heading off to Sinai Temple for Shabbat services one Friday evening in 1959. From left to right: Linda, Susan, and David. Susie's red dress in this photo is *not* the dress with the Velcro® closure in back.

These were the Union prayer books, Haggadah, and hymnal that were used by Sinai's congregants during worship services in the 60s.



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1965.



At left: Rabbi A. James Rudin supervises Mrs. Milton Glaser as she registers Jeff Scharf, age 10, for Sinai Temple Religious School classes. Looking over the young man's shoulder is his mother, Mrs. Jerry Scharf. At this time, classes were held from 10 A.M. until noon.

Right: The 1963-1964 treasurer's report offers an interesting look into the Temple's finances about a decade before the new Sinai Temple structure was built.

ITEMS FROM THE 1960s



Right: Bebbe (Rose) and Eli Mandel joined Sinai Temple in 1964, and their daughter, Gayle, was confirmed in 1968 under Rabbi Rudin's tutelage.

SINAI CONGREGATION Treasurer's Report July 1, 1963 to ~~May~~, 1964 *June 30*

Cash in Bank 7/1/63 \$3,534.13

Receipts

Dues	\$24,340.00	
Interest & Dividends	546.00	
Memorial Book, etc.	150.00	
Miscellaneous	336.00	
Annual Dinner	351.50	
Withdrawn from Savings Account	5,500.00	31,223.50
Total Fund		<u>\$34,757.63</u>

Less Disbursements

Salaries and pension	\$12,971.88
Choir	1,985.00
Utilities	2,284.56
Office Supplies & Bulletin	1,713.74
Repairs & janitor supplies	1,500.06
Insurance	578.40
Youth Activities	85.00
Rent	1,308.00
Adult Education	7.00
To Savings and Transfer	6,700.00
Major Repairs (eqpt)	2,300.00
Annual Dinner	351.00
Annual Dues Union Hebrew Congregation	750.00
Bible & books	272.14
Typewriter & Cart	211.77
Refund	150.00
Travel	503.14
Miscellaneous	404.33
Total Disbursements and transfer	<u>34,076.02</u>

Cash in Bank ~~May~~, 1964 \$ 681.61
June 30

The Couples' Club

by Esther Steinberg,
*with considerable assistance from
Shirley and Richard Newman and
Loretta and Edward Dessen*

The Couples' Club was formed in the mid-1950s to provide a social venue for the many Jewish couples

who had recently arrived in Champaign-Urbana. The rapid expansion of the University of Illinois after World War II led to a considerable

increase in the population of Champaign and Urbana. In addition to students and staff, the newcomers included townspeople such as doctors, businesspeople, and other young professionals. Among them were a few Jewish couples who joined Sinai Temple on their own initiative.

Most of the newcomers were young, just starting out in their careers (the men, that is—the women were stay-at-home moms). They had no friends or relatives in C-U and were eager “to belong.” They did make friends among their academic, professional, or business colleagues, but they wanted Jewish friends, too. Sinai Congregation did not reach out to welcome them. The Sisterhood did have monthly luncheon meetings where it was possible to meet others, but many were long-time members who were not particularly interested in newcomers. In any case, few of the newcomers could attend for lack of babysitters. Two couples who had joined the Congregation—Esther and Marvin Steinberg and Dr. Myron and Bobbie Kulwin—discussed this problem and decided that we needed an organiza-



Esther and Marvin Steinberg, shown in a 1987 photo, were original members of the Couples' Club, and Marvin was a president of Sinai Temple's congregation.

tion to accommodate these newcomers. And so the idea of a Couples' Club was born.

We met once a month on a Saturday night at Sinai Temple in the social hall downstairs. Couples' Club had no constitution, no officers, and no dues. Because we had no secretaries, there are no written records of our activities or of the names of members. Thus, this report is based on the fifty-year-old memories of some remaining members who still live in C-U: Shirley and Richard Newman, Edward and Loretta Dessen, and Esther Steinberg. Errors or omissions are not intentional.

It is not clear how people found out about this group, most likely by word of mouth. There were no requirements for membership. Nobody asked if you were a Temple member, and no officer of the Temple ever inquired or invited non-members to join the Congregation. If you were interested in belonging to the group, you were welcome to join the Couples' Club.

Refreshments were simple cake and coffee. The programs included lectures, parodies, skits, and holiday parties. One of the lectures, on Jewish Mysticism, was presented by Rabbi Benjamin Rudavsky, director of the Hillel Foundation. The Newmans were mainstays of the group and were responsible for many of the creative programs. One was a Jewish Hit Parade, using the top songs of the year rewrit-



Shirley and Dick Newman came up with many of the club's creative programs.



Photo by Illini Studio.



Above, Dr. Isaac and Ruth Morhaim, original members of the club, enjoy an evening out.

At left, Ed and Loretta Dessen, often the hosts of parties for Sinai Temple members at Farm Lake, their rural residence, were, not surprisingly, original members of the Couples' Club.

ten with Jewish/biblical themes. We sang and danced our way through Samson and Delilah, Moses in the bulrushes, and gastronomic Judaism. Costumes were included, and piano accompaniment was provided by Martin Lanznar, our only unmarried member, who also happened to be the Temple organist. One holiday we enjoyed a Casino Night using play money, followed by a hilarious auction using our winnings.

During the first two years, we members planned, cooked, and provided a Passover Seder for all who wanted to attend. Marvin Steinberg led the service. The sixty people who attended the first Seder had such a good time that word of the success got around. The second year we had even more attendees. By the third year, so many people wanted to join us that it was impossible for a small committee to prepare such an event. The stove in the kitchen was so small that we had to do all of the cooking in our homes. Therefore, we moved to the Tilden Hall Hotel for the third year. We let them cater the event, with much coaching on our part.

An important benefit of the Couples' Club was that we found what we were seeking: friendship, camaraderie, and fun with other Jewish couples. An example of camaraderie is captured by the following anecdote. Four of our members were physicians: one an obstetrician (Jack Brodsky), one a pediatrician (Myron Korry), an internist (Isaac Morhaim), and the fourth (Myron Kulwin) a dermatologist. When the telephone rang, we always assumed that it was an emergency call for either the obstetrician or the pediatrician. Both of them were halfway out of their seats before the phone was answered. Imagine their amazement when one evening the call was not for either of them, but for the dermatologist! We all had a good laugh at their expense, but they were neither offended nor upset.

The Congregation also benefited from the Couples' Club. It brought together town and gown. That is, academics mingled easily with businesspeople, doctors, and other professionals. Until that time, this had not been the case.

The initial group consisted of about fourteen or fifteen couples and one single man. Over time, many couples joined and many left the community. There was a great deal of transience. The club existed for about four or five years. By then, we had formed friendships, and it had become difficult to get newer members to undertake the leadership.

Listed here are the names of the original members, to the best of our recollection:

Jack and Lois Brodsky	Aaron and Jewel Kurland
Edward and Loretta Dessen	Martin Lanznar
Owen and Beverly Fabert	Robert and Helen Lowell
Milton and Annette Glaser	Isaac and Ruth Morhaim
James and Adelaide Goldenberg	Richard and Shirley Newman
Phillip and Frances Kessler	Slater Newmans
Myron and Vera Korry	Marvin and Esther Steinberg
Myron and Bobbie Kulwin	Richard and Faye Suchman

The Women Presidents of Sinai Temple: A Tribute to Annette Glaser

by Elizabeth Lipson

Looking back from the vantage point of 2005, it seems strange that no woman held the president's gavel at Sinai Temple until 1979, especially since women had served on the Temple Board for many years prior. It was almost 10 years before there would be another woman president at Sinai. In fact, four of the five women presidents served between 1991 and 2005. Certainly, none of the women who have served as Temple president seems to think there was overt sexism involved. For the most part, 1979 just seemed to be the right time.

What Took So Long?

Nancy Tepper, one of Sinai's five women presidents to date, explains some of the social and historical factors involved: "Our generation of young Jewish families in C-U was very, very lucky. It was the age of Sputnik, and the great push for science and education in U.S. universities. The University of Illinois suddenly found that it had a lot of money and positions, especially in engineering and physics. Although there had been a few Jewish professors at the



Nancy Tepper (1991–1993)

university, the large influx of Jewish professors, even in liberal arts, came in the fifties, sixties, and early seventies. This gave Sinai Temple a critical mass of young people about the same age, looking for friends and a life centered on the Temple.

As Nancy stated in her essay on her presidency, "The Congregation had about 150 families at the time and we became a very close-knit, extended family spanning the generations. We spent holidays together; our children were close friends with our friends' children and had surrogate grandparents galore. A lot of our social lives revolved around Temple and Sisterhood activities in addition to Shabbat services. There was not a Brotherhood, so most of the young men served on the Temple Board at one time or another, and often went out for coffee after a meeting to discuss the pressing issues of the Congregation. Our children were as familiar with the Temple as they were with their own homes. We all served in many capacities, although few women served on the Board of Trustees at the time."

So while women were very active at Sinai, it was mostly through the Sisterhood, CUJE, or other venues. Lisa Libman, another of Sinai's presidents, reflects in her essay on her presidency: "I think that the circumstances of the women's movement, combined with an increase of options, in both the work and volunteer world, contributed to the inevitability of women sitting on the Board

**"...our social
lives revolved
around Temple
and Sisterhood
activities in
addition to
Shabbat..."**

and then becoming presidents. I was told that initially there was a fear that women might take over, but we have tried to keep the Board balanced not only in terms of sexual composition but also in terms of a variety of people from our various minyans.”

The concern that women might become the sole leaders of faith communities is not peculiar to Sinai or to Judaism in general. In the past 40 years, the leadership role of women in religion has been expanded tremendously as women have finally become rabbis and temple leaders. A cursory search of the Internet results in hundreds of articles from sociologists and historians of religion about the “feminization” of religion during this time.

Sinai Temple was also grappling with these same issues, but it was more practical need than ideology that brought us our first woman president. By the late 1970s, a core of women at Sinai had served in leadership positions in the Sisterhood and Hadassah, at CUJE, and in a variety of committee and educational positions. In 1979, there was a woman in the vice-president’s position—a job that would normally lead to the presidency. She, however, was not willing to take on that job for personal reasons and had, in fact, accepted the vice-presidency on the condition that she would ascend no further.



Susan Schomer (1991–2001)

Commitment and Diplomacy

As it turned out, the person slated to take her place was a woman as well. Annette Glaser had just finished a term as Sisterhood president and had worked closely with outgoing Board president Michael Pepper. Annette stepped in to lead the Board during a time when the Congregation was growing, volunteerism was high, and a sense of shared community was deeply felt. She was known for her diplomacy and her tireless work for Sinai Temple.

Annette and Milton Glaser were very active in the Jewish community, and in the greater Champaign/Urbana community. Milt was a much-loved doctor and Annette was a stay-at-home mom to three children. While raising those children, Annette was a committed volunteer for Sinai and various Jewish causes. She belonged to numerous committees and served as Sisterhood president. When she was suddenly



Annette Glaser, Sinai Temple’s first woman president (1979–1981)

Annette Full of Grace—that is the way I remember her. She was graceful in dealing with controversy; gave beautiful, succinct messages from the bimah; and was a thoughtful, insightful teacher of the confirmation class. Because of her adroit manner in dealing with sensitive issues and people, one never heard a bad word about her. Everyone liked and respected her. She had a wonderful sense of humor and laughing at herself kept her grounded. My favorite “Annette saying” is, “I can’t remember anything, but I can recollect everything!” She loved her house and was ready to remodel each spring. She complained that her desk was totally disorganized, but her conversations and writings reflected a disarmingly well-organized mind.

Annette felt deeply for the pain of others and went out of the way to respect and help the people around her. She was a loyal friend to her friends and put her money and time where her thoughts were, when members of her extended family or community needed help. She worried constantly about her children and how hard Milt worked and took enormous pride in their accomplishments and the respect the community had for Milton.

As close friends and study partners we took all of Gary Porton’s classes and were in the midst of reading the Bible together in the year before her death. We spent many evenings discussing the meaning of life, death, and theories of after-life. Annette died four days before our daughter Rebecca’s wedding. Rebecca went with me to the funeral the day before the wedding. We reflected that Annette’s life was a celebration and that as we moved from one life cycle event to the next, we could have no better role model.

Nancy Tepper



Lisa Libman (2001–2003)

asked to be Temple Board president in 1979, she took on the task with her usual vigor.

Jewel Kurland, one of Annette’s closest friends, remembers that Annette was somewhat concerned that she was not up for the task. How-

ever, Jewel states “Annette had the best résumé to assume the presidency. Her presidency of the Sisterhood and Hadassah made her unquestionably the best candidate.”

In talking about her work at Sinai, the one word mentioned most often by her friends is “diplomacy.” Her close friend, Nancy Tepper, shares, “Because of her gracefulness in handling sensitive issues and people, I never heard a bad word about her. Everyone liked and respected her.”

Annette’s children were all imprinted with their mother’s enthusiasm for community involvement. Steve, Bart, and Hollis Glaser all

have their memories of how important Annette's work was to her, and it has made a difference in their lives. Bart remembers coming home from college and listening to speeches his mother was in the process of writing. Hollis was very impressed that her own mother was the first woman president at Sinai, and her friends thought it was a big deal as well. But Hollis recalls her mother had little ego about any of it. For Annette, it was about service and taking responsibility.

It's no wonder, then, that when asked what he learned most from his mother's example, Steve said without hesitation, "Everybody takes their turn. That's what I was taught. You stepped up and took responsibility for what matters to you. No organization or society can run by itself."

When her term ended, Annette continued in other volunteer positions for the Jewish community, serving as the CUJF executive director from 1984-1987 and in other positions. She kept serving through the loss of her husband in 1985, and even during several bouts of the cancer to which she succumbed in 1991. Those who knew her best still feel her loss.

In giving Annette's eulogy, Jewel Kurland said, "Annette, though there are many of us here today from various, diverse walks of life, we are all here because of our affection and respect for you, and the unforgettable manner in which you touched our lives."

"Everyone Takes Their Turn"

Annette also inspired future women presidents. Nancy Tepper, Susan Schomer, Lisa Libman, and Blanche Sudman followed Annette's lead as president. They each were influenced by Annette's legacy. All these women have found volunteering and getting involved to be far more than the path to leadership. By giving their time and efforts, the act of service to the Jewish community has given to them as well. Their accomplishments are remarkable, and yet any of them would say that every Sinai member can make a difference at any volunteer task—a difference that will help to keep our Temple strong for another 100 years. As Annette Glaser so capably modeled, synagogue membership means that everyone takes their turn.



Blanche Sudman (2003-2005)

Note by Editor

Elizabeth Lipson conceived of this article and asked each woman president to articulate her experience as president and especially to comment on Annette's influence on her. Their responses inspired the editor to ask each past president to reflect on his or her term. More comments about Annette as well as other reflections can be found in "The Presidents: Recollections" section.

Arthur Robinson: Shammass

by Lisa Libman

Art joined Sinai Temple in 1961. He used to get really annoyed when the phone would ring during services, so he situated himself by the door so that he could answer it. Eventually the Rabbi would ask him to open or close the windows, adjust the heat or air conditioning, and do other odd jobs. He gradually took over all the jobs of overseeing the basics of the Temple services. He would make sure that the candles and wine were in place for services, prepare the Torah, turn the lights on and off, distribute our prayer books, show the Oneg volunteers how to use the kitchen, take out the garbage, and lock the doors.

We've come to rely on Arthur's wonderful sense of humor, his consistency, his terrific memory, and his love and devotion to Sinai Temple. He is very knowledgeable about Judaism and has been an active member of the Traditional Minyan as well as a regular on Friday nights. He directs the ushers each year for the High Holy Days. He organizes the holiday food delivery at Provena Covenant Hospital for Christmas and Easter. He has also served every Jewish organization in town, from the Jewish Federation, to being the secretary of the Sinai Temple Board of Trustees, to

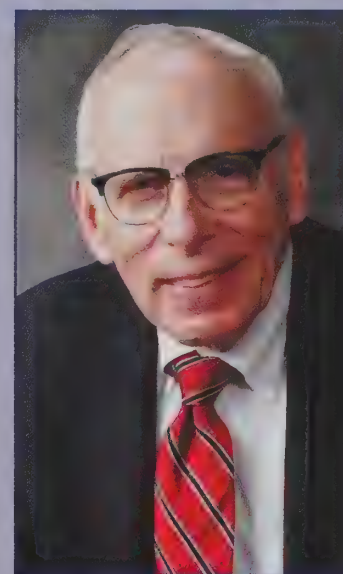
being President for Life of B'nai B'rith! In his very special way he has made himself invaluable to our entire Jewish community.

As chair of the Sinai Temple Rabbinic Search committee in 1968, Art was instrumental in selecting student Rabbi Sally Priesand, who later became the first female rabbi in Reform Judaism in the nation. When he polled a large number of families about the acceptability of a woman rabbinic student, the response was overwhelmingly positive. Thus, "Rabbi Sally," as all affectionately knew her, had her first congregational experience at Sinai Temple, serving with distinction until Rabbi Samuel Weingart joined us later that year. The Congregation and Arthur are justifiably proud to have played a not inconsequential role in one of the most revolutionary changes in American Judaism in the twentieth century—the ordination and acceptance of women rabbis, now also found in the Reconstructionist and Conservative movements.

I was always a little afraid of Art. He gets annoyed if people don't take care of the Temple with the same scrupulous attention to detail that he has always exemplified. So to ask him to show you how to use the dishwasher can be a lesson filled with anxiety—you had better get it right or Art would let you know about it! But behind that

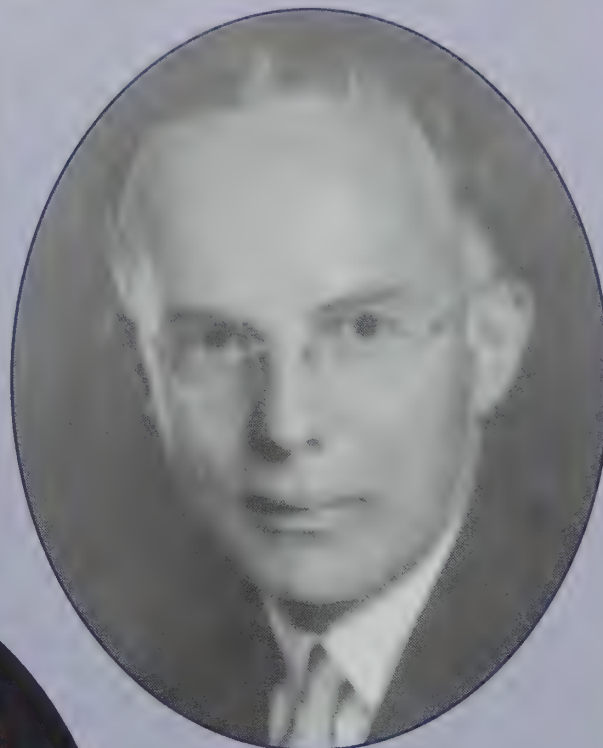
sometimes prickly exterior is a man with a heart as big as can be. Little did he know, 44 years ago, that answering that phone would lead to holding the keys to the Temple and would endear him to so many people!

Arthur Robinson has been fully involved in the Jewish community for more than 40 years serving as an officer or Board member of the Jewish Federation (and the former Champaign-Urbana Jewish Charities); the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Endowment Foundation; the Central Illinois Jewish Federation (president); Sinai Temple (secretary, trustee, *gabbai*, and chair of the ushering committee for 43 years); Hillel Foundation (president of the Hillel Foundation Building Fund); B'nai B'rith (secretary and president of Grand Prairie Lodge) and Israel Bonds committee member.



Professor Robinson was born in Brooklyn on the day of the 1929 stock market crash. He received his undergraduate education at The Cooper Union, his M.S. and Ph.D. from UIUC. He taught at the University of Minnesota for five years and at UIUC from 1960 until 1993. He is now Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering.

THE PRESIDENTS: RECOLLECTIONS



Three generations of the Lewis family: top left, Wolf Lewis; directly above, Leonard Lewis; left, Arthur Lewis. All of these men served Sinai Temple as congregational president.

Arthur Lewis, 1947–1950

This essay was composed by Lisa Libman based on interviews with Mr. Arthur Lewis.

My grandfather Wolf was a stow-away on a boat from Poland to New York when he was seventeen years old. He had family in Troy, New York, and lived there for a few years. He walked and hitched rides all the way to Marionette, Wisconsin, from Troy, arriving with \$16 and change. He was a peddler and sold notions such as pins and needles door to door for eleven years. Finally he opened his first store in Marionette. It was a dry goods store. He expanded it twice. His store was located in an area that farmed lumber. When the lumber became depleted, the business died.

So he went to Chicago and got on the Illinois Central. Although he had planned to get off at Kankakee, the conductor told him not to stop there, as there was not enough opportunity, nor at Gilman, which was too small. But when the train stopped in Champaign, the conductor told him he could make it here, so he got off the train. The first store he opened in Champaign was called Ye

Old Economy. It grew eventually into a large department store called Lewis's. He became one of the founding members of Sinai Temple along with his sons Leonard and Herman. Wolf was the second president of Sinai Temple from 1907 to 1908. My father, Leonard, became the ninth president of Sinai Temple from 1921 to 1923. My uncle Herman was president from 1958 to 1960.

Growing up Jewish in Champaign gave me a sense of pride in my religion and heritage. I never once experienced anti-Semitism. My father worked at the store and eventually I did, too. I went to the New York University School of Retailing in the 1930s to learn about business. One thing I learned through experience is that a people business such as a department store has to be run with heart to be successful.

When I came back from the Army in 1947, I was thirty-two years old. I had not taken an active leadership role in the Temple up to that time. Charles Loeb asked me to be vice-president. He was the Urbana postmaster and was a respected member of the Board. The president was Harry Levinsohn. Tragically, Harry died after a few weeks or months as president, so I stepped up to become president. It was a frightening prospect. I was very awed by the older leaders of the Temple such as Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Meise. I didn't really think I knew enough and felt unprepared. Charlie Loeb acted as a mentor to me and helped me learn my way around on the Board.



Charles Loeb, past president of Sinai Temple.

The old Temple used coal to heat the building. We had to bring in six tons at a time, enough to heat the building over the winter. Our janitor's name was Mr. Lierman. He had to come in every day to bank the coal. He cleaned and oversaw the building and functioned as our *shammass*.

A significant issue I dealt with was the Youth Group. Some of the teens belonged to the traditional, or Orthodox, minyan. Mr. Marco, a member of the Orthodox minyan (and father of Jewel Kurland),

wanted those kids to go to a different locale for their get-togethers and keep the kids separate. Sinai Temple had a larger Reform Youth Group. I wanted the Reform and Orthodox kids to stay together, and that's what finally happened.

Probably the most significant accomplishment was moving the services from Sunday morning to Friday night. The Reform movement had chosen Sunday morning as the time to pray so as to fit in with the rest of the world. My mother, Bernice Lewis, who was more traditional, longed for the service to be moved to Friday night. I knew that our Sabbath began at sunset on Friday and thought it would be most appropriate to hold services on Friday night. However, I was afraid to go up against the rather strong-willed older members of the Board. I called Mr. Kuhn, who graciously agreed, and so instead of lobbying for the change, I JUST DID IT! And the results remain with us to this day. To get the change going, we got a group of people to call their friends and ask to



Harry Levinsohn, one of Sinai's presidents.

pick them up and take them to Temple. The first Friday night service was packed! We continued the practice of calling people after the initial change to encourage participation.

Raising money was different in those days. We did not have any official dues statements. Sam Libman, Lou Garfinkel, Louie Tanner, and I talked over how we could raise funds to cover our expenses. Many people could not afford much right after the war. We asked for \$300 but accepted less if it was too steep for some. Formalized dues statements were sent out by 1950.

In those days we had student rabbis come in from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati or various synagogues in Chicago. We arranged for them to come here typically once a month and for the holidays. At that



Lou Garfinkel, past president of Sinai Temple.

time we and many other synagogues in the Reform movement were only performing confirmation, not bar mitzvahs. I believe that Stuart Cohn was the first person at Sinai Temple to become a bar mitzvah in the early 1950s.

I enjoyed being president—especially the second year, as by then I felt I knew what I was doing and had a good relationship with the Board members. At the time, my wife was very busy raising our four children. The volunteer work she did focused more on Hadassah over the years. While



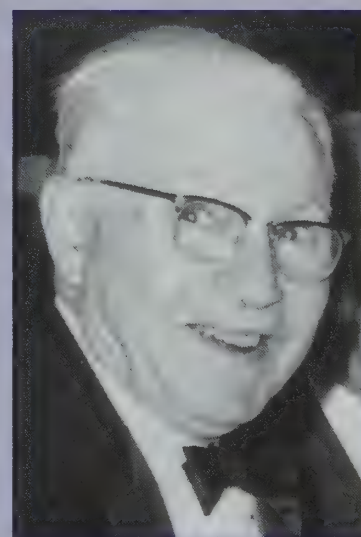
women did participate on the Sisterhood Board, they did not become presidents at Sinai Temple in those years.

Israel became a nation during my presidency. I don't remember any particular response from the Temple. However, I do remember that during the 1967 war my uncle Herman Lewis, Sam Shmikler, and I helped to raise money to support Israel.

A year or two after being president, I ran Hillel for five or six years for the Chicago B'nai B'rith. Then Ezra Levin helped by being a co-chair. Hillel was important because of Dr. Sachar's work. He was an incredible orator. He educated our community on many topics. I remember a lecture he gave in the 1930s on the six greatest menaces we faced at the time: Tojo, Chamberlain, Mussolini, Goering, Goebbels, and Hitler.

Incidentally, I helped to recruit the renowned Jewish basketball player, Tal Brody, from New Jersey to the University of Illinois. He is returning this year from Israel to celebrate the University's 100 years of basketball.

Being president was very fulfilling. I was proud to serve in a position



that my father and his father before him had filled. Sinai Temple has always meant a great deal to me and to my family.

Herman Lewis, past Sinai president and uncle of Arthur Lewis.

Joseph Hamburg, 1963–1965

This essay was composed by Lisa Libman based on interviews with Mr. Joseph Hamburg.

My parents first arrived in New York in 1905, but Mother wanted to live in a small town. They were sponsored through HIAS by Isaac Kuhn and moved to Champaign in 1910. I was born here in 1914 and was raised in



Joe Hamburg in this 1963 portrait as president.

Champaign. Even though my mother preferred small-town living, my parents wanted my siblings and me to have a better Jewish education than we could get here. So when I was eight years old, we moved up to Chicago and stayed there for sixteen years. As a young man I sold furniture as a traveling salesman. On one of my trips I came to Champaign, met my wife-to-be, and in 1938 married Merle. We lived

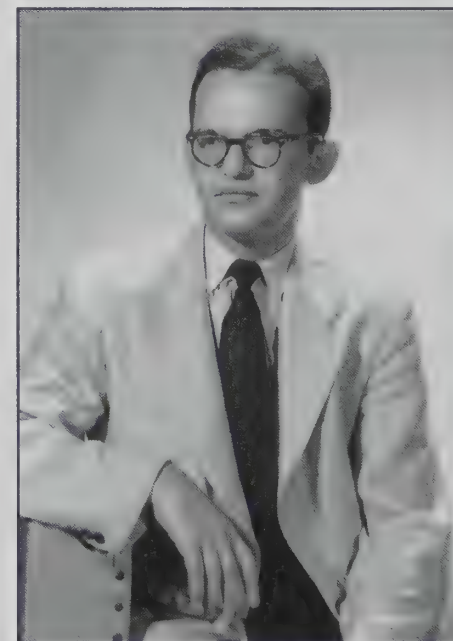
here until 1946. After the war we moved to Minneapolis, where we lived for four-and-a-half years. We moved back in 1951 and went into Merle's family's dry cleaning business.

Even though I was brought up in a traditional background and can read Hebrew, I preferred the Reform service because I understood the English. So we joined Sinai Temple. Leonard and Herman Lewis called and asked me to serve on the Board in 1955. I began my Board work as secretary. I was to follow Charlie Loeb, who was serving as secretary and then became president. I remained secretary for eight years until I became president in 1963.

At the time we had about 150 memberships, and the Temple was really starting to grow. It was a very interesting, satisfying, and rewarding experience. Our town, which was once filled with Jewish retailers and businesses, was changing. More Jewish professors and their families were moving here, and our Jewish businesspeople were dwindling. Our primary expansion came from academia, a trend that has continued to this day.

Rabbi Bernard Martin, our first full-time Rabbi, served during the time I was secretary. He was a bachelor when he came here, and then he married Nancy Platt, whose father was a judge from Danville. He was a scholar and eventually went to Case Western to get his doctorate and then taught there for the rest of his career. Sadly, he passed away in 1982 at the age of 54. We were very close with him. Rabbi Henry

Cohen came in 1958 and stayed through the first year of my presidency. He was a delightful young man. He left after six years for another congregation. Then Rabbi James Rudin served during my last year as president. He was very serious and somewhat reserved. He also came as a bachelor and then married



Rabbi Bernard Martin, Sinai's first full-time rabbi.

Marcia Kaplan, a daughter of a professor here. He went on to be very involved with the American Jewish Committee. Serving with three rabbis was a very interesting experience, as each had a different personality style.

A new addition was made to the old temple in the 1950s to house the growing Sunday School. Rabbi Martin pushed for that and at the same time encouraged us to purchase more land for further growth. Due



A group of Sinai Temple students, including the confirmation class of 1967, poses on the steps of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio. Rabbi A. James Rudin, rabbi during Joe Hamburg's last year as president, stands at left.

to his insight, we purchased the land that our current Temple sits on. *The News Gazette* published a picture from the ground-breaking ceremony for the new Temple in 1973 of my mother-in-law Mrs. Garber, my wife Merle and me, our son Steve, his wife Anita, and our grandson Jeff. We were four generations of Sinai Temple members proudly holding shovels to begin the ground breaking.

After serving eight years as secretary, assuming leadership of the Temple seemed very natural. All in all I served twelve years on the Board: eight as secretary, two as president, and two as past-president. Arthur Winakor served as president after my term. He was a CPA and Ph.D. He was very capable. Transitions of presidents were very smooth. We got information and assistance from UAHC on administrative duties and other relevant information.

Merle grew up in Champaign. She was confirmed in the class of 1934 with Lenore Lewis. Merle served as Sisterhood president from 1953 to 1955. They did very important work to subsidize the Sunday School. The women of Sinai did so much to make our school successful: Bernice Lewis and Hattie Kaufman ran it during the 1920s, and one of Merle's good friends, Adele Libman, served as the first Sunday School principal in the 1940s. This devotion by so many of the women was a wonderful asset.

A group of friends from Temple would get together on Saturday nights to eat, socialize, and play cards. We contributed the kitty toward the

Temple's menorah and other projects. Cuppy and Adele Libman, Sam and Jean Libman, Arthur and Norma Lewis, Louie and Bertha Tanner, Joe and Alice Shmikler, Lou and Ruth Garfinkle, and we formed the core group. The men played gin rummy and the women played canasta. The

women donated their proceeds to the Sinai Temple Religious School.

Women took on leadership positions in our synagogue in much the same way as women's roles evolved in society in general. Early on we didn't think it suitable for a woman to lead a religious organization. After all, men have always been counted as part of a minyan, not women. This mentality certainly overflowed into Temple volunteer life. Men and women had their own separate areas to concentrate on. However, this has clearly changed in the last thirty years in the Reform movement.

The biggest surprise of being president was the satisfaction of the work. Because I felt so well prepared, having served on the Board for so long, there were no tremendous challenges. We had great committees. People were very motivated and many served with distinction. A president can be successful only when others are working together. If our members have the desire, or are imbued with a feeling of Judaism and want to participate in leadership, then one receives tremendous satisfaction and reward.



SINAI TEMPLE GROUNDBREAKING. Members of the Sinai Temple Congregation held ceremonies Sunday to break ground for a new temple at Duncan and Windsor roads. Left to right, are Rabbi Samuel Weingart; Mrs. Sam Garber; Edward P. Tepper, congregation president; and Prof. Donald E. Brotherson, vice president and building committee chairman. Kneeling is Allison Weingart. The new building will replace the temple at 301 W. Clark, C, which was heavily damaged in a January 1971 fire.

Although this is not the photo described by Joseph Hamburg in this article, it is another *News-Gazette* photo of the Temple ground-breaking, and his mother-in-law, Lena Garber, appears in this one as well. Also pictured are Rabbi Sam Weingart, Edward Tepper, Don Brotherson, and the rabbi's daughter, Allison. The photo was published on April 29, 1973.

Edward Tepper, 1971-1975

When I received a telephone call one evening from Helen Levin asking whether I would be willing to serve as president of Sinai Temple, I thought she must be kidding. Who would take that job at that time? The Temple was occupying temporary facilities following a disastrous fire, and its future was unclear. Furthermore, it appeared that we would be looking for a new Rabbi in the very near future. But Helen was very persistent, and so in the end I said "yes."

As it turned out, it was the perfect time to be a Temple president. Faced with major decisions, the Temple family worked together to resolve some very contentious issues in a very positive manner.

The first problem to be solved was "what to do about the building." Some members just wanted to restore the old building on Clark Street. Others wanted to build a new building at the Clark Street location. Still others advocated a new building at the edge of town on Windsor Road.

The matter came to a head at a special meeting of the Congregation held at the Urbana Civic Center. The discussion had gone on for some time, and tempers were getting short, when a "stranger" rose to speak. When no one recognized him, he

introduced himself as long-time Temple member Jack Brodsky, wearing his new toupee for the first time in public. The Congregation burst into laughter, the tension was broken, and the members went on to vote for the Windsor Road site.

With over 100 members actively working on the building project, the new Sinai Temple project was brought to a successful conclusion, and the Windsor Road building was dedicated on April 11, 1975.

CHAMPAIGN-URBANA

News Services of Both The Associated Press and The New York Times

Ninety-second Year—No. 4

© Copy a Week
By Carrier

TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 1971

Address

Blaze hits Sinai Temple

BULLETIN

Champaign firemen brought the blaze in Sinai Temple under control at about 1 p.m. today.

Capt. James Baker said that the blaze evidently started in the basement but that he wouldn't be able to determine the cause of the fire until the water subsides.

"We may be able to find out tomorrow," he said, "but right now there's seven feet of water in the basement."

No one was injured by the blaze.

By James Kroemer
Of The Courier

An entire shift of Champaign firemen was still fighting to bring a fire under control at



Smoke pours from Sinai Temple in Champaign—badly damaged by fire today
(Courier Photo by Jim Rutledge)

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Ed Tepper

Equally demanding was the selection of a new Rabbi for the Temple. As with the building, the Congregation was faced with the “safe” choice and the “challenging” choice. Once again, the Congregation rose to the occasion, offering the pulpit to Rabbi Isaac Neuman. The wisdom of this choice speaks for itself—Rabbi Neuman is still with us today, enriching our Jewish experience.

These two major decisions brought the Congregation together in a very positive manner, and set the agenda for future growth and success. And I was very pleased to be a part of this process.



Sinai Board of 1975—Seated l. to r.: Ruth Tager, Stanley Levy, Eva Blum, Don Brotherson (pres.), Roy Lipschutz (sec.), Miles Klein, Merle Hamburg. Standing l. to r.: Helen Siess (treas.), Harold Gluskoter, Edward Tepper, Michael Tepper (v.p.), Jack Simon, Joan Levy.



Michael Tepper

Michael Tepper, 1977–1979

I was president of Sinai Congregation from 1977 to 1979. We had just completed our move into the Windsor Road building. I had served a term as a member of the Board, starting in 1970—just before the fire that destroyed the Clark Street building; two years as finance chairman (it was a separate position from vice-president at that time); and a

term as vice-president. I had also served on the building committee as its legal counsel.

We were then still in the process of developing the policies and procedures that would define our use of our new building. When I was asked to be president, I felt both an obligation and a desire to complete that job.

The late 1970s was a “golden age” for our Congregation. Our membership was growing, our finances were healthy, and interest in the Congregation by our members was high. I can remember only two people who declined to serve on a committee or in another position when asked.

During my term as president, a group of members asked for separate traditional High Holy Day services. There was some resistance to the suggestion based on the fear that separate services would destroy the cohesiveness we were enjoying as a single Congregation. Rabbi Neuman

helped hammer out a compromise in which we would retain a single service for the evening of Rosh Hashanah, which all members would attend, and provide two services for the remainder of the High Holy Days. The Board approved that compromise as Congregation policy.

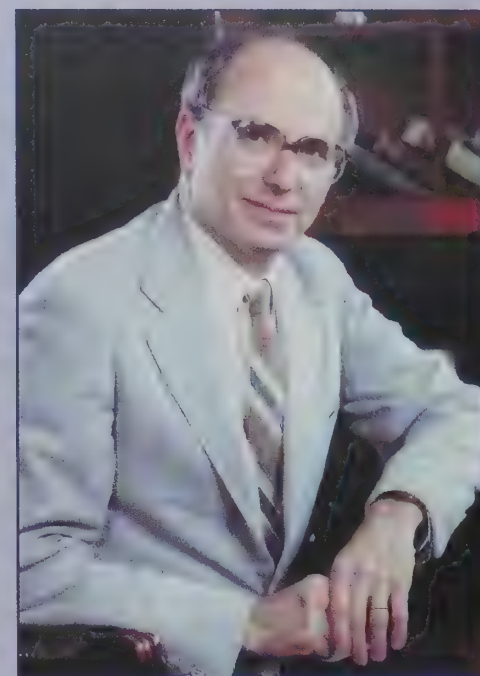
I received a great deal of satisfaction in serving as congregational president, but left the office (after nine years of attending Board meetings) with the strong feeling that it is a job that a person should only have to do once.



Miles Klein, 1981–1983

I accepted the presidency because I had already served on the Board and on committees and felt that I could be a steady influence. I served one term on

the Board. I also served on the Religious Education committee, including as chair.



One of my major **Miles Klein**

influences was Rabbi Neuman, who encouraged me. I also had a good relationship with my immediate predecessor, Annette Glaser.

The major challenge of my tenure was perhaps to calm down those members who had strong opinions about how things should be run, often by seeking compromises, but not always. The most surprising aspect was learning about how important the various Temple activities were to many of the members. In retrospect, this should not have been surprising.

I intuitively felt it to be important that the Temple make a broad spectrum of Jews feel welcome. Perhaps this was a trend, but it was and is needed in Champaign-Urbana. If the Temple is important to you and your family, do not be shy about step-

ping up and doing your share to keep its many functions going. Be willing to serve on committees, the Board, and the "presidential line."

Here are three personal highlights of my service in the presidential line: (1) attending the Biennial in Toronto when Annette was president, and I was vice-president; (2) having the wedding of my older daughter, Cynthia (Cindy), take place in the Temple during my presidency; and (3) presiding over (in a very loose sense) the mending and restoration of our Torahs by a scribe during my two years as president.

Charles Kozoll, 1983-1985



Charles Kozoll

from 1983 to 1985. Certainly it was an honor to be asked and it seemed very natural to accept.

My family has always been active in the Jewish community: my older sister was president of her Sisterhood and was asked to become president; Pop was an informal *shammas*; one of my uncles founded a temple in San Diego; and another uncle was a temple president in Milwaukee.

Joan and I became active at Sinai soon after we arrived in 1974. My participation started with budget work, then to the Board, and then president

To be effective as Temple president, you have to listen and rely on wise people for advice. Don Brotherson, Annette Glaser, Aaron Kurland, Marvin Steinberg, Seymour Sudman, and Mike Tepper were willing to discuss my questions and offer suggestions. You can't help but learn from Rabbi Neuman, even when you disagree with him.

In 1987, after twelve consecutive years of participation, it was time to step back from active involvement. I helped out with two or three fund-raising events. Wiley Deckard and I engineered the planting of the evergreen trees on the Temple lot.

There were no real surprises, a few events that took some time. A number of congregants told me what to do; as a result, if at all possible, I don't answer the telephone at home.

Only on rare occasions do I give advice.

Aaron Kurland, 1987-1989

My father-in-law was Jack Marco. His commitment to civic and to Jewish issues was a strong influence in my personal life.

I have always felt a responsibility for and a strong identity with Jewish and community causes. I served as president of B'nai B'rith, Chairman of United



Aaron Kurland

Jewish Appeal, member of the Board of Hillel Foundation, and president of the United Way. I also served on several civic committees and boards, including the Family Service of Champaign County Mental Health Association and the Champaign Zoning Board of Appeals.

I held many positions on the Board, such as membership chairman, Finance committee chairman, and vice-president. Ultimately, when asked, I served as Sinai Temple's president.

During my tenure of office, the dues structure of Sinai Temple was completely revised to better accommodate the needs of the Congregation. In addition, we felt the need for Sinai Temple families to enjoy a familial comradeship in pursuing a common goal. Thus began Sinai Temple's Fun-d Day, a program that consisted of fun outdoor activities that promoted fellowship of our membership while enhancing the Temple's treasury.

If I were to be asked what I enjoyed most about my tenure as Sinai Temple president, I would undoubtedly respond that I enjoyed greeting the Congregation at services and welcoming the bar/bat mitzvahs into the Congregation.

Stanley Levy, 1989–1991

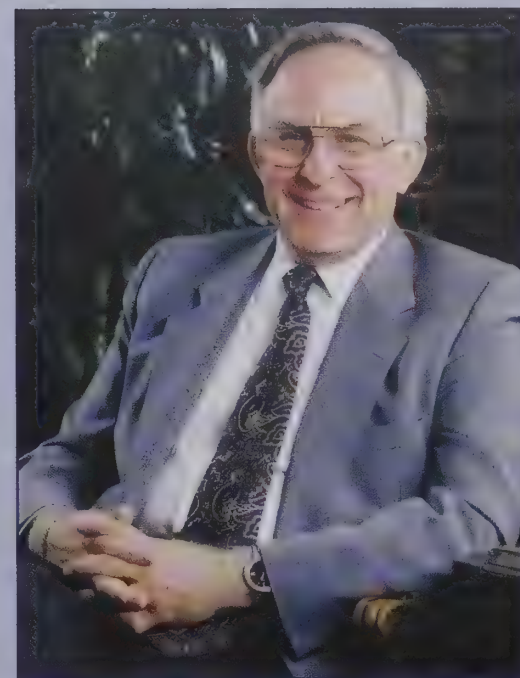
I have a very clear recollection of when I was invited to become president of Sinai Temple. It was a Friday night in February at an Oneg Shabbat. Seymour Sudman, whom I respected highly, sidled up to me. He started a neutral conversation and then said, "We are looking for the next president of the Congregation. I think it is your turn to do so. Would you accept the challenge?" It did not take long to decide affirmatively. Having served as principal of the Religious School for a (too long) period of time, on a number of com-

mittees, including those related to the new building, and a full term on the Board, I felt equipped for the challenge and the opportunity. I was also not at all naïve about how much time and effort it would take.

Two years as the vice-president for Aaron Kurland, whose humor, good sense, and good judgment often carried the day, were followed by two very busy and active years as president. A new Rabbi, Brad Bloom, had

joined us. Fresh from an assistant's position, he was learning on the job what it meant to be the congregational Rabbi. I saw my relationship with him as tutoring and mentoring, and also as reminding him that the membership was the Congregation, not the Rabbi. While the Rabbi is the religious leader of the Congregation, other aspects of congregational life are dependent upon the membership and the lay leadership that evolves. Upon reflection, Rabbi Bloom took full advantage of his opportunity here, learning how to become an even better rabbinic leader and guide for his congregants.

The term of office was hardly without issues. Among the items considered were the role of the non-Jewish spouse in the Congregation, the beginning of the havurah groups, attention to the grounds, including an ill-fated effort to create the berm on Windsor Road as a biblical flower garden, two congregational retreats to discuss issues and problems of



Stanley Levy

long- and short-range planning, a number of essentially no-cost but highly profitable theater parties at the Assembly Hall (as fund-raising events), teacher recruitment and teachers' salaries, and the ever-present issues of maintaining the physical plant. We also got underway a program to develop a permanent endowment for the Congregation. Dues alone would not meet our needs in the long run, but endowments could help a great deal. What was started during my term was not, however, continued later on. During my term of office we sought to purchase the land east of the Temple and failed; but conversation with Kyle Robeson and his colleagues reassured us that any development would be tasteful and appropriate (which has been the case). We made no headway in obtaining the land to the west of the Temple.

I was gifted to have an able and energetic Board. I rarely had to ask more than one person to do a job that needed getting done. Board members took on major assignments, and we rarely left a Board meeting with a lack of clarity as to how we were going to make the next moves, whatever they were.



Rabbi Brad Bloom

Recruiting members of the Congregation to participate was much easier than I had thought it would be; lots of willing hands were accessible. Being president was a challenging assignment but a very rewarding one—assuredly never dull. We worked hard to make sure that Board meetings began and ended on time (and that the agenda captured people's attention). I felt good about those relationships.

In retrospect I was well prepared and equipped to serve as president. Having served on more than a half-dozen committees, with both major and insignificant assignments, and having had a previous term of service as Trustee, I had a good idea what the job was going to be all about. The major challenge was doing a

decent job as president while serving as an executive officer of the Urbana campus. I could not have done both without the support of my wife and my staff on the campus.

But I also had support and assistance from the Sisterhood. The women of Sinai Temple in their organizational context provided essential leadership and direction to the total effort. Making the Temple the center of Jewish communal life would not have been possible without the cadre of women who led the Sisterhood. Its passing into history has, in my judgment, diminished the Congregation; nothing has quite replaced that energy and those leaders.

Jewish communal life was changing at that time and has continued to do so. The UAHC meetings that I attended were provocative and often insightful and very helpful. The Union was actively engaged in discussions about Outreach, and I was proud of the role we played in our community. While on the one hand there was motion and movement toward greater tradition and respect for ritualistic activities, on the other hand we were expected to reach out into our communities to mixed marriages and especially to the children of such marriages. During my term of office, some significant headway was made in both outreach and inclusiveness.

Would I do the job again? Probably. Would I do it the same way? Probably not. An essential ingredient for both serving on the Board and serving as president is experience in doing the routine and ordinary work of the Congregation. Serving on committees, agreeing to take on responsibility for defined tasks, serving as chair of a committee, and recruiting fellow congregants to participate will serve a person well who accepts the mantle of responsibility. Seymour's approach to me many years ago said it all: it was my turn to lead. For the community to thrive and the Congregation to serve its members and the community, one needs to accept the notion that "my turn" has

come. I was quite fortunate in having lots of help from the Board, from the committees, and from dozens of individuals.

Writing this some years after I served, I remain pleased that I was invited to do so and that there were so many willing to do so much to



And the Lord said
unto Moses, Hew thee
two tables of stone
like unto the first:
and I will write
upon these tables
the words that
were in the first
tables, which thou
bakest.
(Exodus XXXIV:1)

make my term of office successful. For there to be a true Jewish community in Champaign requires that each of us "takes his or her turn" in doing whatever possible to make the community work.

Abraham Rattner, renowned for his expressive interpretation of biblical themes and lyrical calligraphy, produced a set of 12 color lithographs. This one at left, *Moses and the Tablets of Stone*, and the others were gifts by Fay Tepper and her children in memory of Isaac Tepper in 1976. Photo courtesy of Aaron Averbuch.

Nancy Tepper, 1991-1993

Our generation of young Jewish families in Champaign-Urbana was very, very lucky. (Ed and I were married in 1962.) It was the age of Sputnik and the great push for science and education in U. S. universities. Illinois suddenly found that it had a lot of money and positions, especially in engineering and



Nancy Tepper

physics. Although there had been a few Jewish professors at the University of Illinois before then (Alice Berkson's grandfather being among the few), the large influx of Jewish professors, even in the liberal arts fields, came in the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s. This gave Sinai Temple a critical mass of young people about the same age, looking for friends and a life centered around the Temple.

The congregation had about 150 families at the time, and we became a very close-knit extended family spanning the generations. We spent holidays together; our children were close friends with our friends' children and had surrogate grandparents galore. A lot of our social life revolved around Temple and Sisterhood committee meetings and Shabbat services, to which we took our children from probably the age of three. There was no "Brotherhood," so most of the young men served on the Temple Board at one time or another and sometimes went out for coffee afterward to

discuss the pressing issues of the Congregation. Our children were as familiar with the Temple as they were with their own houses.

We all served in many capacities, although few women served on the Board of Trustees at the time. I became the Religious Educator and served for about ten years. During this time, Annette Glaser became president, an unusual circumstance that set a precedent for the future. It was a natural step for me to agree to be president when I retired from Religious School work.

Just as when I was Temple Educator, people were very grateful that you were doing the job of president, so everyone tried to be helpful. Few people turned down committee positions, and there were very few disgruntled phone calls. After my presidency, I served on the Federation Board and was co-chair with Janie Yairi of the Russian Resettlement Committee, which was one of the most rewarding projects I have worked on (and it was wonderful working with Janie).

Concerning women presidents at Sinai, this is my perspective. As I mentioned above, there were many men involved in the Temple in the years before Annette Glaser was president. There was a large pool of men who were willing to serve. Annette was a woman that everyone admired and was the perfect choice, man or woman, at the time she was asked to be president. After Annette it was still unusual to have a woman in the major position at a Temple, and there were other men who had donated their time on committees and the Board and were willing to be president.

It wasn't until the years around the time that I was asked to be president that it became consistently difficult to find male presidents. It became obvious that the most qualified members of the Congregation were women, because they had worked for years in Sisterhood, Hadassah, and Federation, knew the Jewish community inside and out, and were tremendous organizers.

Excerpts from "A Lay Sermon by a Young Lady"

By Ray Frank, Yom Kippur, October 1890

From time immemorial the Jewish woman has remained in the background of history, quite content to let the fathers and brothers be the principals in a picture wherein she shone only by a reflected light. And it is well that it has been so; for while she has let the stronger ones do battle for her throughout centuries of darkness and opposition, she has gathered strength and courage to come forward in an age of progressive enlightenment and do battle for herself if necessary, or prove by being a noble helpmeet how truly she appreciates the love which shielded her in the past.

On Rosh Hashana I was surprised to find such a large number of you assembled here for worship, and at that time the idea of a permanent congregation first occurred to me. Mentioning the matter to some of the prominent Jewish gentlemen of Spokane, I was informed that the number of Hebrews and their financial standing was sufficient to warrant an established congregation. "Then," said I, "how is it you are content to go on in this way having neither *schule* nor a Sabbath school? Do you think you are doing right towards yourselves, towards your children who are growing up without a creed of any kind, a most dangerous thing for society and a most ungrateful way of paying tribute to God." I was answered that such a difference of opinion existed among you, so many were prejudiced against reform, the remainder stubborn for orthodoxy, that it would be a hopeless task...

Form yourselves into a permanent congregation as soon as possible, and organize a Sabbath school. One must believe in something, and one must have faith in something or become a menace to society. Keep one day holy, and teach your children to do the same. It isn't good for you to do as you are doing. We are no longer a nation of people, although we are often spoken of as such. We have no ruler, but are simply citizens of the country we live in. We are loyal to the civil rule that governs us, and we should be loyal to the religious rule that we all bow to.

Friends, I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me, and in the name of all we Hebrews hold most dear, I ask you to be patient with each other. Drop all personal feeling in this matter, and meet each other half way over your differences; give each other a hearty handshake for the sake of the cause, and I prophesy Heaven will crown your efforts with peace and prosperity.

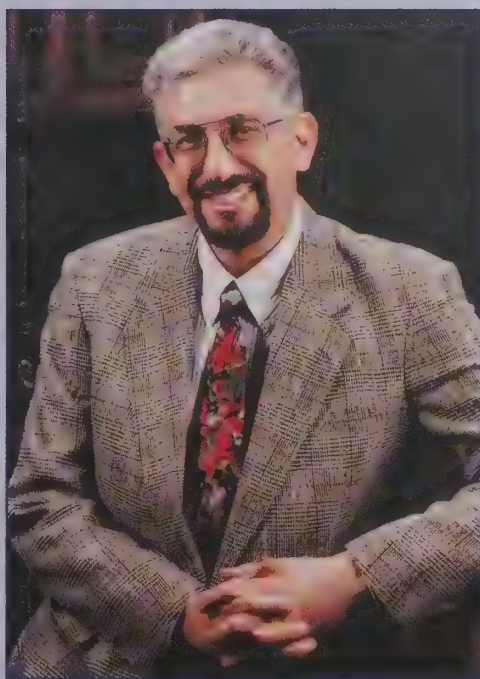
From to-night on **resolve to be something.**

Leonard Heumann,
1993–1995

Being asked was an important part of the process of becoming president, because I was asked twice, and the first time I was both shocked and honored but had never thought I was a candidate for the position. I also realized I couldn't afford the time from my private life (two children in their teens and one near his teens), my professional career at the time (I had a major research grant and was going up for full professor), and my existing community service commitments (I was president of the Board of Family Services of Champaign County). But that request started me thinking and discussing it with my wife, children, and friends. Once I thought I could do it, I also started clearing my schedule in case I was asked again, so that I could say yes. So the first request was almost more important than the one I accepted.

I was so lucky. I had Nancy Tepper as my presidential mentor while vice-president, and Michael Shapiro as my vice-president. They both were wonderful sounding boards and advisors throughout my tenure. Once in the presidency, Rabbi Bloom and I forged a solid friendship that really helped when times got rough.

I believe my service on the Board was the normal six years as vice-president, president, and past-president. I served on a number of other



Leonard Heumann

committees, most notably the following standing committees: the Social Action committee as member and chair, the Arts and Acquisition committee, the Sinai Temple Addition committee in its fund-raising stage and as co-chair overseeing both design and construction, the Building committee as co-chair, and the Finance committee as chair. I cannot begin to remember all the special committees, but some that come to mind are the first S2K committee; the Long-Range Planning committee (twice); rabbi, educator, and board member selection committees, and various special events committees. I taught Religious School one semester—an elective class on “A Jewish View of Aging and Elder Care.”

All my major accomplishments as president grew out of challenges I did not anticipate when I entered the presidency.

1. The Sisterhood disbanded during my presidency. This was a major and difficult loss for the Temple community. The Sisterhood raised a substantial amount of money for education and special social and cultural events for the Sinai and Champaign-Urbana Jewish community. Sisterhood fund-raising was linked to many of our social activities, and people bonded and interacted through the Sisterhood. Sinai Temple had no “Brotherhood,” and other age/life-cycle social groups were nonexistent or sporadic in their activities and weak in their coverage of the membership. So Sisterhood could not be seen as just an organization for women; it was a major focal point of much of the social and cultural life in the Temple.

The immediate impact on the Board and my presidency was that Religious School lost its administration, management, and key finances. My first reaction was to try to find a way to reverse the Sisterhood decision. I was told in no uncertain terms that times had changed and the activities of the Sisterhood could no longer be managed by the women of the community alone because most of them were now working outside the home, many in professional careers, while still bearing the pri-



Evoking the timeless beauty of the ancient city of Jerusalem, Eva Boehm-Frankel, a German-born Israeli artist living in Jerusalem, was commissioned to create this batik for Sinai Temple in 1971. It is a gift of the Mah-Jongg Club. Photo courtesy of Aaron Averbuch.

mary responsibilities of managing their homes. I got the message loud and clear and began working on interim solutions, such as retaining the second treasurer to handle the Religious School during the transition to a Board

and committee structure that fit the new administrative dynamics without a Sisterhood.

2. The second challenge was unfortunately related to the first. The educator at that time and the rabbi did not get along at all. As a result, I became the interlocutor between the educator, rabbi, and the chair of the Education committee, spending long hours in face-to-face and telephone meetings with all three. The Sisterhood collapse created additional stress, exacerbating the tensions and pressures on all four of us, but we were able to keep the Religious School afloat without most of the Congregation ever being aware of the frayed tempers, hurt feelings, and renegotiated and rejuvenated cooperation that went on behind the scene.

3. As a result of the financial chaos in the Religious School and related budget crunch, I opened the first serious negotiations with the CU Jewish Federation, asking them to consider keeping more of their funds

in the CU Jewish community and helping with Jewish education at Sinai. As a result, we hired our first professionally trained educator, with a permanent commitment to provide half the funding for that salary from the CUJE.

4. The financial crunch caused by the collapse of the Sisterhood also required the Board to look for other places in the budget to cut costs and to raise new revenues. Unfortunately, one of the easier targets for cutting costs in the minds of some Board members was our membership dues to what was then called UAHC. Since then, we have had two other instances or continuations of the debate over UAHC membership, each time voting to come back to full membership. All have caused me and other presidents a great deal of time in keeping Board meetings cordial and productive, as well as forcing a subcommittee into long hours of negotiating with UAHC representatives, sometimes in out-of-town meetings with the UAHC representative.

5. All presidents have "rabbinic relations" issues during their presidency. My relation with Brad Bloom was a true friendship, but as part of our "maturing" as a Temple, the Board conducted a major mid-term evaluation of Brad that temporarily stressed our friendship. Rabbi Bloom got impatient with the long evaluation process, which only made our ultimate meeting to go over the results more intense. While the Board evaluation was quite good, Rabbi Bloom questioned the entire process and began his search for a new position not long after that evaluation.

6. I had the honor and privilege of both "weathering" Brad Bloom's lengthy job search process once he had decided to move on, and of overseeing the search for, and negotiations with, Norm Klein as the new Sinai Temple rabbi. Brad Bloom was a finalist in several searches before he chose his new rabbinic position in Sacramento, California. One synagogue even sent a search committee here to Sinai Temple to "observe" and conduct interviews. I think the Board and I succeeded in keeping the transi-

tion smooth in both a social and a spiritual sense, so that the majority of the membership wasn't even aware that the process was taking place.

My surprises as president really begin as chair of the Finance committee while vice-president. In many ways this is as difficult a task as anyone can have in the Temple or any religious institution, and it really tests and prepares one for the presidency. In no area of Temple management is there more of a challenge than in determining and collecting a "fair

dues contribution" from the membership. The negotiations can be difficult, embarrassing, and painful, and the process of how these dues, once arrived at, are going to be paid, and what the payees think is good or bad use of their contributions can be, well, let's just say "amazingly" complex. You see the Temple in a very different light from this perspective.

Administering the Temple is a complex and dynamic process that must get the bills paid while retaining a tranquil and spiritual environ-

ment of social bonding and mitzvot within the Jewish community and in service to larger communities beyond our front doors. As we deal with more mixed marriages and diverse family relations, and as we find out that negotiations with people over dues involve past relations that didn't exactly work out with other presidents, vice-presidents, treasurers, rabbis, educators, you name it, that you knew nothing about, you learn about becoming a good listener, a patient negotiator, and a discreet manager.



At left, another in the series of color lithographs by Abraham Rattner (see page 184). This one depicts Noah releasing a dove from the Ark. At right, a serigraph by Israeli artist Shraga Weil, *Haggadah*, a gift to the Temple in honor of Stephen and Ruth Tager by their friends. Here humankind ascends from youth to old age guided by the teachings of the *Haggadah*. Photos by Aaron Averbuch.

Once the time as president is over, you are wise enough to be an emeritus president and look back on what I now see as a wonderful adventure in which I learned far more about leadership than I was ever able to contribute during my tenure. With the great gift of hindsight, most past-presidents can say with a straight face to anyone considering the presidency, "Go for it; it is worth every minute."

I spent one long and difficult term on the Board of the Jewish Federation. It was difficult because I chose as my goal to champion the idea of keeping more of the funds we raise right here to serve this community. There were many on that Board who did not agree, but the debates helped me hone my arguments and served me very well once I became Temple president.

I had a history of involvement in synagogues before coming to Champaign-Urbana. I sang in the choir, I taught Religious School (the pre-confirmation class that studied other religions and visited their places of worship), and in my teens was active in Temple Youth and JCC youth groups.

As I stated above, the women's liberation movement and an economy that required both parents in a conventional household to earn income outside the home had a profound effect on my presidency. These events lead to the demise of Sisterhood, but also started the Temple and other volunteer institutions down the path to a stronger and fairer distribution of voluntary and professional roles, and I was pleased to be part of it.

I don't recall any specific trends in Judaism within my tenure as president. However, I really wish I could have had the S2K (Synagogue 2000) program/movement during my presidency. I might not have been able to make any speedier changes or broaden the membership involvement in the program's ideals and experiments, but I would have liked to try my role at the bully pulpit in support of S2K. I really came to understand how difficult it is to be the rabbi of the only synagogue in a town

with such a diverse Jewish community. The first S2K committee spent two years just picking the easy-to-reach "low-hanging fruit" of our rich culture to enhance our services, holidays, special observances, and sense of community. I love the study of ways that Traditional and Reform treatments of music, ritual, and other trappings of our faith can be joined and blended to enrich our spiritual experiences while retaining our Reform commitments to Jewish life.

Of course, there are going to be sacrifices of time and energy during one's tenure that at times can be extensive. But I also found my "spiritual comfort zone" was severely tested because so much of my Temple life was consumed by and exposed to the operational "underbelly" and politics of running the institution. But this is quickly forgotten, and a richer and deeper respect for Judaism and Jewish life awaits at the other end. I have one very important warning, however, for those with a family at home. Don't make a unilateral decision to do this; your family must not only agree to your taking on a leadership role, but also agree to be your most important support and consulting group while doing this. I know my wife and children were key partners in my presidency.

I think the new tradition of women presidents reflects the times. I am a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of Illinois, one of the most sexually liberated professions worldwide. And our department is one of the largest and the third-oldest program in the world. We had women students reach parity in applications, admissions, and graduation rates by the mid-1970s. But we didn't have a single woman on the faculty in the mid-1970s and only two in the entire sixty-year history before that, and neither one reached a tenured status. Over the last fifteen years seven of our eight new hires have been women, two of whom have already reached tenured positions.

It's been an honor to serve Sinai Temple, and as with all positive volunteering, I received more than I gave and the experience enriched my life.

Michael Shapiro, 1995–1997

Over the years we have lived in Champaign-Urbana, my family and I came to love Sinai Temple and the local Jewish community. We got a great deal out of this affiliation, and I wanted to give something back. I served two years of a three-year term on the Board in the 1970s and then two 2-year terms as secretary in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Currently I am director of the Program in Jewish Culture and Society at the University of Illinois, and past-president of CUJE.

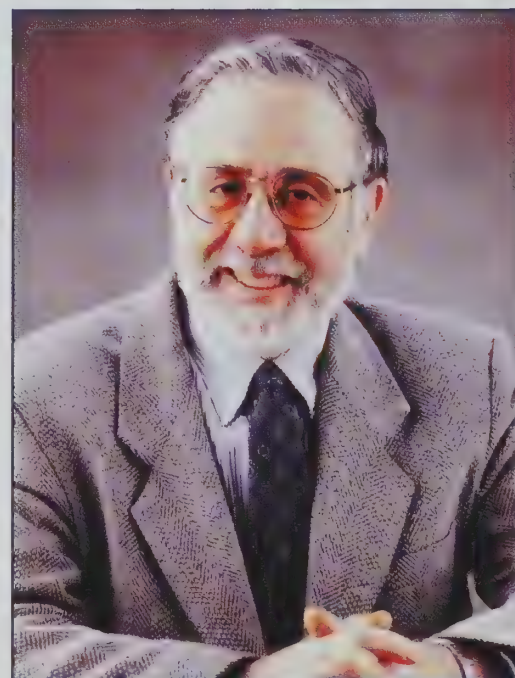
My wife was very encouraging during the time I was thinking about whether or not to accept the nomination as president. She also was an extremely sagacious advisor during the years I served, and a most tactful surrogate when people called to express their outrage to me over this or that and I was not home to take the call. Over the years, Rabbi Neuman has been a strong influence on my thinking about Judaism and the Jewish community, as has my good friend Gary Porton. Rabbi Klein became rabbi of Sinai shortly after my term began, and he and I met weekly and developed a very solid and warm working relationship.

The main issue I dealt with as president was physical growth. It became clear even when I was vice-president that the Traditonal Minyan had outgrown the kindergarten room at the end of the school wing. The Religious School was also on double session for lack of space, and so it was rather clear that we had to find a way to expand the physical structure.

The decision to do so was made by the Board during my tenure as president. I was in favor of it, and the Board's support was eventually unanimous, but not without some very hard thinking and much vigorous discussion. We settled on an architect, who drew up a plan, and we launched a capital campaign, which eventually raised \$1.7 million.

Ground was not broken until the tenure of my successor, but the preliminary work—getting the Congregation and the Board to support the expansion and commit to a capital campaign, and bringing the campaign to a successful conclusion—all occurred during my watch.

I was pleasantly surprised to find so many people willing to volunteer their time and energy for the Temple, both for the building campaign and for the



Michael Shapiro

whole panoply of activities that run on the fuel of volunteers' willingness to give of themselves for the good of the Temple. I know we live in a world where volunteerism is an endangered species, and I had my share of turndowns, but I learned that if I found the right job and made the appeal myself, I could very often get the volunteers I needed to help the Temple run smoothly.

Israel is always a contentious issue in this and other Jewish communities, but the fact is that my presidency occurred during the Oslo period, when peace seemed to be at hand, and during a time when the Israeli economy was flourishing, so Israel was not as thorny an issue as it has become since the start of the second intifada, four or five years ago.

The Reform movement has been tending toward a greater use of traditional ritual elements, and I was happy to support this trend, in a moderate sort of way.



Brass hannukiah copied from an ancient Sephardic casting at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, features rotatable candleholders and feet designed as dolphins. Acquired in 1978 as a gift from Don and Mary Lou Brotherson in memory of their fathers. Photo by Susie Hamburg H. Sarapin.

members for leadership positions.

In earlier times, we had a Sisterhood, an active one, and that was the place where women exercised their leadership skills with regard to Sinai. Few ever sat on the Board. Annette and Nancy were exceptions. But in recent years, with the demise of Sisterhood, many more women have held Board positions, and of course served as presidents. In some organizations, when women begin to take positions of leadership, men opt out. One can speculate about the reasons for this opting out, perhaps after a certain tipping point has been reached, and whether or not this explanation might fit Sinai, but not here, not now. This and related issues were addressed by the Long-Range Planning committee, which I co-chaired with Robert Manaster.

We desperately need for people in their 30s and 40s to engage in Temple leadership. In the past, people worked their way up through an active committee structure. That structure seems to have eroded over time, so that when nominating committees meet—and I have served on several in recent years—we usually select people who have shown some interest and done some work for the Temple, but who have not necessarily assumed junior leadership roles. We need to find a way to train younger

Susan Schomer, 1999–2001

I have always been involved with Jewish organizations: Temple Youth Group, Young Judaea, OSRUI, Hadassah, Sisterhood, and Sinai Temple. During my thirty-plus years here in Champaign-Urbana I have served in many capacities, including two terms as Sisterhood president. My mother was very active in her Sisterhood, so my participation seemed natural.



Susan Schomer

Annette Glaser went from being Sisterhood president to Temple president. The Temple's vice-president was unable to become president, so Annette was slated. I succeeded her as Sisterhood president. My second term as Sisterhood president was about ten years later—we were unable to find anyone else to serve.

I enjoyed my term as Temple president. We dedicated our addition, approved our new bylaws, and began our participation in the Synagogue 2000 program. The bylaws process and the introspection of our Temple life during the Synagogue 2000 meetings proved to me how important the Temple is to our members. The process brought out the best and the worst in our members. People consider the Temple to be THEIRS, and want their feelings, ideas, and opinions to be incorporated into Temple life. The president is the recipient of phone calls, letters, and many comments and complaints about all facets of congregational life.

Lisa Libman, 2001–2003

Volunteering is a family legacy. Both my grandmother and mother were very active leaders in their communities. Like them, I have made volunteer service an important component of my life. I have served in a variety of capacities as chairperson of several portfolios for Sinai Temple Sisterhood, Hadassah, and Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, where I was campaign chair for two terms and then president. I sat on the Sinai Temple Board for three years before becoming secretary and then vice-president. This variety of experience prepared me to take on the presidency. I accepted because I felt I could give the time and energy and because I felt an obligation to serve my community.

Locally, I started my volunteer work at the Federation when Annette Glaser was the administrator. I worked very closely with her and was inspired by her calm, capable ways. She believed in what she did, and she was an articulate spokesperson. Shortly after her work at Federation, she served as the first female president of Sinai Temple. She seemed to just take it in stride, a further commitment to serving our Jewish community. Later, when Nancy Tepper became our second female president, I was president of CUJF and we had several joint organizational meetings.

I served eleven years on the Board, including two years as past-president, a position that serves the important role as historian and advisor. Looking back, I feel that serving on many positions both in Sisterhood and on the Board allowed me to get to know a variety of people of all ages. This traditional pattern of leadership development is ideal. We are always seeking people of talent and interest to be leaders, whether one learns in a seminar or through real-life experiences.

Many momentous events occurred during my presidency, from May 2001 to June 2003.

- We had major budget problems, as we had more expenses than income. This occurred in part because during the five years of fund-raising for the new addition we had not done any additional fund-raising for the annual operating budget. Over the summer of my first year, we had several contentious community meetings to deal with the budget. We dramatically cut the music budget and UAHC dues payment in half. The latter resulted in three years of negotiations with UAHC to become reinstated.

- On September 11, 2001, the World Trade Center was demolished by terrorists, bringing con-

cerns locally for our Temple security. We had a special emergency fund-raising effort that raised money for a security system that was eventually installed in the Temple.

- Our Temple members in cooperation with CUJF came together to support families affected by a tragic loss in our community by providing comfort, counseling, and critical support in their time of need.

- During this period of time the second intifada was at it peak, and there was great loss of life due to terrorist suicides in Israel. An increase in anti-Semitism abroad stirred up the emotions of our congregants and resulted in meetings and efforts to communicate about the situation.

- Our Synagogue 2000 team, one of a cohort of nineteen other congregations across the country, began meeting on a monthly basis in an



Lisa Libman



Lisa Libman introduces Rabbi Norman Klein at the Sinai Temple 100th Anniversary Gala in February of 2004. Photo courtesy of Illini Studio.

effort to study and attempt meaningful transformation of services to meet the changing and diverse needs of our congregants.

- A youth congregation was formed to provide High Holy Day and occasional Shabbat services for adolescents and their families.

- A new policy was developed to allow for one free year of membership for anyone who had never before belonged to a temple as an adult. This was found to be an incentive for those who felt unsure about their commitment. Some people began to participate fully in a short period of time because of this generous welcome.

- The obligated and endowed funds of the Temple are managed by the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Endowment Foundation (CUJEF). The ownership of the funds remains Sinai Temple's. The original intent and purpose of the funds are unchanged. We arranged for this transfer of management for better recordkeeping, upkeep, and accountability of the funds.

- We went through a Religious School educator search when Jean Deichman left. We hired Beri Schwitzer, who is enthusiastically developing new and innovative curricula and programming for our students.

- Initial planning and preparation began for Sinai Temple's 100-year anniversary to be held on February 7, 2004, by co-chairs Susan Schomer and myself. Many programs and events were planned for the

centennial year with the theme of "Celebrating our past—Embracing our future." A variety of activities would take place throughout the year to highlight our history and build for our future.

- The Long-Range Planning Committee, chaired by Michael Shapiro and Robert Manaster, made a significant effort in reaching out to our entire extended Jewish community via focus groups, community meetings, and a survey to assess our reality and our needs. The results were analyzed and reported and resulted in thoughtful and meaningful suggestions and recommendations.

Working with such diverse members of our Temple provided many opportunities to problem-solve and interact. Sometimes the intensity of this was more than I had anticipated. Also, the enormous amount of detail that a president in a congregation our size has to deal with was surprising. This is due in large part to our lack of a Temple administrator, who would ordinarily do much of the work that our presidents do. Therefore, I spent far more time doing Temple work than I had anticipated.

The horror of September 11, 2001, and the intifada were the two most profound outside influences. Both contributed to our Temple's efforts to provide a security system and enter into a series of trans-denominational meetings and seminars across our community to foster better understanding about our differences and our similarities.

**Initially, there
was a fear that
women may
take over, but
we have tried to
keep the Board
balanced...**

The efforts of the leaders of the Reform and Conservative movements provided an extensive syllabus, three conferences, and many resources to help those congregations chosen to participate in Synagogue 2000 to evolve their thinking and prayer practices. We were chosen to participate in the second of two cohort groups, and our team met monthly for two-and-a-half years. A third syllabus was created and a new team developed to study how to create meaningful community.

I think that the circumstances of the women's liberation movement, combined with an increase of options in both the work and volunteer world, contributed to the inevitability of women sitting on the Board and then becoming presidents. Initially I have heard there was a fear that women might take over, but we have tried to keep the Board balanced not only in terms of gender composition but also in terms of a variety of people from our various minyans.

Leadership in an organization that is important to oneself provides great growth; it hones and develops skills for interaction with a diverse membership. Serving in a variety of positions before taking on the presidency helped me, as it gave me a much better understanding of the complexity of the organization. The Reform movement provides a wealth of information and wonderful assistance for a tremendous range of Temple organizational issues. Getting to know and utilizing those resources by attending the regional and national biennials is a tremendous asset. Having good organizational and communication skills along with a sense of humor are the three most important skills that contribute to a satisfying, productive presidency.



Blanche Sudman

Blanche Sudman, 2003–2005

Before I began my path to the presidency, I had several models of inspiration. The first woman president, Annette Glaser, fascinated me with her wisdom and intelligence. I had great admiration for her. I did not at that time, however, think it was unusual for a woman to attain this position. After all, she was superbly qualified, and to me that was the only

requirement needed. It wasn't until our next woman president assumed that office ten years later, when I happened to overhear a single remark from a guest to our Temple—"They have a woman president!"—spoken in tones of awe and amazement as Nancy Tepper walked onto the *bimah*, that I realized the unique significance of what had seemed to me so natural.

The greatest inspiration on my path to the presidency was my husband, Seymour Sudman, Temple president from 1985 to 1987, whose leadership was wise and admired by all. He always seemed to know the right way to accomplish what was best for the Congregation as a whole. I wanted to follow in his footsteps.

The long journey to my presidency began when I joined the Social Action committee in 1993. We worked on many significant projects, such as Thanksgiving baskets, the food drive for the Eastern Illinois Food Bank, Meals on Wheels, and the development of Mitzvah Day. As the chair and co-chair of the Mitzvah Day committee, I had the opportunity to hone



Sinai Temple participants in Mitzvah Day activities for the Crisis Nursery. Left to right, standing: Edythe Davis, Joanne Manaster, Bernice Lieberman; seated: Hilda Banks, Sarra Khamarmer, and Jean Ginsberg. Photo courtesy of Illini Studio.

my skills of organization and communication. I found that this not only allowed me to meet more members in our Congregation (and beyond), but that it is possible to help many people experience the happiness and satisfaction that come from working together on a coordinated project for the community at large.

In 1998, I had the honor of being elected to the Board of Trustees for a three-year term. In 2001, I became vice-president for a two-year term. During my vice-presidency, being concerned about the deficit in our budget, I organized a major fund-raiser each year: a monologue about the Rothschild history by talented actor Bernie Dean, and a musical about the life and artistry of Danny Kaye.

One of the accomplishments of my presidency has been the development of important committees:

- The Fund-Raising committee has taken on the task of meeting our budget needs. Because of the constant increase in the cost of living and because some people are unable to pay full dues and school tuition, the Temple would be unable to meet our expenses without the support of fund-raising.
- The Social Events and the Connections committees are concerned with bringing congregants together to promote social integration by organizing activities or by reaching out to congregants in creative ways.

During my presidency, Sinai Temple celebrated its 100-year anniversary with a gala dinner at the Champaign Country Club and the launching of the project to write our inspirational history, *Amid the Alien Corn*.

I believe that the primary responsibility of the presidency is to provide leadership that understands and responds to the aspirations, needs, and concerns of the entire Congregation. With the many divergent interests of the individual members, it is always necessary to try to find the best solution that can accommodate all.

The presidency is an important position that offers the potential to lead the Congregation to achieve great things. I have enjoyed this enormous challenge and responsibility and found its rewards to be beyond measure. I am deeply indebted to the Congregation for their confidence in having allowed me the honor of representing them in striving together for an ever stronger union of faith and fellowship at Sinai Temple.

Gallery of Sinai Temple Presidents 1904-2004

	1904-1907 Jacob M. Kaufman		1907-1908 Wolfe Lewis		1908-1909 Morris Lowenstern		1909-1910 Isaac Kuhn		1910-1911 Samuel Weingarten		1911-1912 Monroe Lowenstern
	1912-1918 Jacob M. Kaufman		1919-1920 Albert Stern		1921-1923 Leonard Lewis		1923-1925 Charles A. Wolff		1925-1926 Leonard Lewis		1926-1934 Isaac Kuhn
	1934-1939 Leonard Lewis		1939-1945 Charles Loeb		1945-1946 Lee Reineberg		1946-1947 Harry Levinsohn		1947-1950 Arthur Lewis		1950-1951 Samuel Libman
	1951-1952 Ezra Levin		1952-1954 Louis Garfinkel		1954-1955 Ralph Berkson		1955-1956 Charles Loeb		1956-1958 William M. Youngerman		1958-1960 Herman Lewis
	1960-1961 Marvin Steinberg		1961-1963 Carl Greenstein		1963-1965 Joseph Hamburg		1965-1967 Arthur Winakor		1967-1969 Chester Siess		1969-1971 Charles O. Silverman
	1971-1975 Edward Tepper		1975-1977 Donald Brotherson		1977-1979 Michael Tepper		1979-1981 Annette Glaser		1981-1983 Miles Klein		1983-1985 Charles Kozoll
	1985-1987 Seymour Sudman		1987-1989 Aaron Kurland		1989-1991 Stanley Levy		1991-1993 Nancy Tepper		1993-1995 Leonard Heumann		1995-1997 Michael Shapiro
	1997-1999 Gary Porton		1999-2001 Susan Schomer		2001-2003 Lisa Lane Libman		2003-2005 Blanche Sudman	<p>"Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be."</p> <p>—Ralph Waldo Emerson</p>			

RABBI'S REFLECTIONS

Reflections on My Tenure at Sinai Temple in the Context of Developments in American Judaism

August 1995 to the Present

by Rabbi Norman Mark Klein

With the continued sage advice of Rabbi Isaac Neuman, emeritus rabbi of the community, and following the rabbinic leadership of Rabbi Brad Bloom, who took a position as rabbi of Congregation B'nai Israel in Sacramento, California, Sinai Temple has continued to grow in membership, programming, staff, and facilities under my tenure, which began August 1, 1995. In the course of a ten-year relationship as rabbi and Congregation, much has been accomplished. We have instituted the full-time position of educator (this position began in July 1995); completed an over \$1.5 million fund-raising project that led to a beautiful new addition, including doubling our classroom numbers, our sanctuaries, and our office, library, and gift shop space; participated in an ongoing nationally sponsored study of initiatives in congregational activism and involvement entitled Syna-

gogue 2000 (S2K); incorporated several new minyanim; and instituted regular Shabbat morning services, among other initiatives.



Isaac Mayer Wise was a pioneer of Reform Judaism. He organized the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the Union for Reform Judaism) in 1873, the Hebrew Union College in 1875, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1889. A prolific writer, he authored *The Cosmic God*, a philosophical book based on lectures he delivered from 1874 to 1875.

Our participation with S2K was the result of the Reform movement's involvement with that initiative as one of the ways to enrich the spiritual life of member congregations. This involvement represented a shift toward tradition that had been noticeable in the "Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism" adopted

at the 1999 Pittsburgh convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which I attended in May 1999. This historic document followed in the tradition of broad statements about Reform Judaism adopted by rabbinic action over the course of more than a century in America, including the initial "Declaration of Principles," or "The Pittsburgh Platform" of 1885; "The Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism," or "The Columbus Platform" of 1937; "Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective," adopted in San Francisco in 1976; and "Reform Judaism and Zionism: A Centenary Platform," or "The Miami Platform" of 1997.

Just as these other Reform rabbinic statements of principle had served as guides to individual congregations within organized Reform Judaism, so the Pittsburgh 1999 "Statement of Principles" provides our Congregation with a sense of where we are regarding our participation

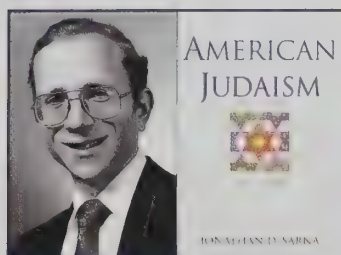
in the spiritual and cultural currents flowing within the Reform movement generally. Such a comparison leads me to see us as very much in the mainstream of Reform Judaism. For instance, under the rubric of Torah, our Congregation's emphasis on Hebrew in the service and on the study of Hebrew texts both for adults and children underlines our agreement with the following statement from the "Principles": "We affirm the importance of studying Hebrew, the language of Torah and Jewish liturgy, that we may draw closer to our people's sacred texts." Also from the Torah section of the "Principles" is the statement that "we bring Torah into the world when we seek to sanctify the times and places of our lives through regular home and congregational observance." This thought reinforces our Temple's commitment to encourage all Jews to pursue the rewards of regular ritual observance at home and at Sinai

Temple, so that we might learn to apply the lessons of liturgy, and our reverence for God, in our daily lives. By acts of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, and *tzedakah*, righteous giving of our time and money, we are brought closer "to fulfilling the prophetic call to translate the words of Torah into the works of our hands." Our Social Action committee, long a force in our Congregation toward this end, has been newly revitalized to serve the larger community. The final section of the "Statement of Principles" reiterates *mitzvot* and understandings that Sinai Temple strongly supports as a congregation. For example: *ahavat Yisrael*, love for the Jewish people; *k'lal Yisrael*, the entirety of the community of Israel; the complete equality of men and women in Jewish life, expressed both through our egalitarian leadership and worship structure; the inclusive nature of our community, open to all Jewish individuals and families



Rabbi Klein leads a group of congregants at a *kallah*, or retreat, at Camp GUCI outside Indianapolis, in the study of Hebrew and Torah in accordance with the statement from the "Principles": "We affirm the importance of studying Hebrew, the language of Torah and Jewish liturgy, that we may draw closer to our people's sacred texts." From left, Andrea Klein, Rabbi Klein, Elizabeth Shapiro, Michael Shapiro, Rudi Laufhutte, Blanche Sudman, and Seymour Sudman.

and the intermarried; and our commitment to “a vision of the State of Israel that promotes full civil, human and religious rights for all its inhabitants and that strives for a lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors.” We encourage our young people through education and funding to spend time in Israel, we have sponsored a Temple trip to Israel, and we work with the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation to support Israel, as well as Jews in need throughout the world.



However, each synagogue is different in some respects from all others, and Sinai Temple over the 100 years of its existence has evolved gradually to its present unique personality as an institution. Jonathan Sarna has just come out with an important book

that is an authoritative exploration of its title's subject: *American Judaism* (Yale University Press, 2004). I shall use some statements in his last chapter, “American Judaism at a Crossroads,” as a springboard to reflection, as well as noting some local variations to his findings discoverable in our Temple community.

Sarna says that “two interrelated and highly contentious statistics count for Jews above all the rest: their absolute numbers in America and their rate of intermarriage” (p. 357). In Sinai Temple we have prided ourselves on being a welcoming community that encourages all Jews, all those who want to be Jewish, and all those married to Jews to participate in Temple life. Because we have provided the opportunity for every congregant to participate in a minyan that addresses his or her predilections and background, Jews whose backgrounds differ widely find a home at Sinai Temple. Our traditional minyan, whose attendees are full, active members of the Congregation, makes our Temple unique in the Reform movement. We are one of the few congregations among the Union for Reform Judaism's (URJ's) congregations that do not define



ourselves by what is within the umbrella of Reform Jewish communities, nor do we engage in the one-upmanship common in

smaller Jewish communities with competing Jewish denominational affiliations. In such other communities—unlike our own, where our traditional members joined individually and voluntarily—agglomerated congregations were formed out of formerly separate Conservative, Orthodox, and/or Reform congregations. They then find themselves living together in uneasy proximity as one congregation. Because the affiliation with Sinai Temple is entirely voluntary, however, the members' diversity of background leads to a remarkable harmony regarding varied Jewish practices.

Based on anecdotal information, the intermarriage rates among the children of Sinai Temple members and the rates reflected by national statistics are congruent. Also true of our community is this statement by Sarna: “Opposition to intermarriage, once normative in American Jewish life, is fast becoming exceptional” (p. 364). Nevertheless, what I have seen in our congregational community is that, because of the Jewish background provided by our Temple membership through home and community observance and the modeling of parents and friends, there is a marked tendency among children of mixed married couples who affiliate with the Temple, and children of two Jewish parents who marry out of the religion, to want to raise their future children as Jews.

As a result, and despite a local Jewish population survey that suggests an aging Jewish population, there has been only a modest fluctuation up and down in Temple membership, which, for the moment (2007), is at about 310 families or member units, and the small variation in the number of students in our Religious School during the past twelve years has been

At right, the *bimah* of Sinai Temple's sanctuary during Shabbat services. Photo by Benjamin Halpern.





proportionately small. This trend runs counter to national statistics which indicate that the number of Jewish children under the age of seventeen has fallen dramatically to historically low levels. This relative stability is partly a result of an increase in the population in Champaign-Urbana, but another partial explanation is the addition to our numbers by mixed-married families and entire families (parents and children) converting to Judaism and joining our Congregation.

In this area as well, our community runs contrary to the national statistics. Sarna says that conversions have “plummeted.” Not so in Champaign-Urbana, where conversion classes have held steady each year between five and ten individuals. This year there are ten. Children whose parents allow them to convert do not attend the adult classes, but instead attend the Religious School once their parents choose Judaism, convert, and join the Congregation. Sarna states that with the Reform movement’s positive vote on Patrilineal Descent, acknowledging children of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother as Jewish, “a central incentive for conversion disappeared.” My experience in supervising the conversion process is rather that the steady source of motivation of people seeking conversion is twofold: a sincere adult decision that Judaism answers the faith needs of the potential convert, and a desire to partici-

pate fully in the spouse’s or potential spouse’s religion and in the raising of children with religious consistency.

One of the interesting developments within Champaign-Urbana was the increase in the Israeli population, mostly from people employed by Amdocs, a high-tech company based in Israel, though some are affiliated with the university or other companies in town. The Temple has encouraged the fifty or more Israeli families employed by Amdocs, as well as the larger social circle of Israelis in the area, to participate and eventually affiliate in Temple life, and some have done both. Interestingly enough, very few of the Russian Jewish families welcomed into our community over the years, though they were initially offered free memberships, maintain an affiliation with the Temple. And Sarna notes that Jewish immigration “has declined drastically.”

Another factor affecting Jewish population in Champaign-Urbana is the exodus of the children of the community due to the lack of concentration of Jewish population—it is, as my son the history student would say, a feedback cycle. Students attend our Religious School through Confirmation in tenth grade, and often stay on as teacher’s aides through twelfth grade. Every student who is Bar or Bat Mitzvah makes a commitment to continue religious education at Sinai Temple through Confirmation, and most of them honor that commitment. As a result, our retention rate from Bar/Bat Mitzvah through Confirmation is one of the highest I have encountered in any Temple in the country. Because almost all the students who receive any Jewish education in our community, and even among such surrounding communities as Danville, attend our Religious School and get to know each other through ten to twelve years of religious school like brothers and sisters, it is almost a rule of thumb that none of them ever becomes romantically involved or married. Therefore, they make their spousal choices, and their choices of residence, which may be initially motivated by going away to college or

the need to find work in larger cities, in mostly larger urban areas with larger Jewish populations. For instance, I am told by congregants that there is an informal association of former Champaign-Urbana Jews in the Washington, D.C., area, where many have found spouses or work. Many Jewish young adults also move for the same reason to Chicago. Some, after such migrations (though these are the exceptions that may prove the rule), return with their spouses to Champaign-Urbana, sometimes to family businesses.

Sarna concludes his history of American Judaism with the optimistic observation that “today, as so often before, American Jews will find creative ways to maintain and revitalize American Judaism. With the help of visionary leaders, committed followers, and generous philanthropists, it may still be possible for the current ‘vanishing’ generation of American

Jews to be succeeded by another ‘vanishing’ generation, and then still another.” Sarna refers to the irony that, throughout our history, people have decried the imminent demise of our people, and yet we have withstood both persecution, and in America, remarkable acceptance, and created in contemporary America a Jewish renaissance of learning, involvement, and commitment even while people continue to bemoan the rise of intermarriage, the declining Jewish birthrate, and the diminishing numbers of those who identify themselves as Jews. Here in Champaign-Urbana, we have in the last ten years grown as a community, seen a beautiful addition built on to our Temple with funds collected within the community in a remarkably short time, continued to develop our educational and spiritual resources, investigated new forms of worship through involvement in the organizational modeling available in Synagogue 2K,

enhanced the music at our services, and added a regular Shabbat morning service that follows our regular Shabbat morning Torah Study. Only the future will tell what new avenues our community will explore, but it is a sure bet that the vibrant membership of Sinai Temple will continue for another 100 years to explore, embrace, preserve, and expand their Judaism and, in the process, increase the attraction of this remarkable Jewish community for Jews throughout central Illinois.



Rabbi Klein oversees the signing of the *ketubah* in the Temple library minutes before officiating at the marriage of Marvin Sarapin and Susan Hamburg Huelsing. Mira Hamburg, mother of the bride, and Joel Sarapin, son of the groom, look on. Susan came back to be married in Sinai's sanctuary because her first wedding ceremony with her late husband Joe Huelsing in 1972 had to be held elsewhere due to the destruction of the sanctuary in the fire of 1971. Photo by Corley Photography.

Part V

This Century of Spirit

by Elizabeth Klein

This century of spirit, two houses of meeting,
nine rabbis, countless acts of loving-kindness,
one hundred years of memories,
the fabric of Sinai Temple's history.

1904—The Champaign and Urbana Hebrew Congregation
took root and one year later
a religious school began.

Doors opened to enfold our children and
the congregation grew like a loving family,
arms embracing all
who wished to be a part.
Retelling honors the welcomers and welcomed,
commemorates our past.
Though the building dedicated in 1918
is gone, it is remembered
CU fashion, the fashion too of Jews:
the southwest corner of Clark
and State now called Temple Place
recalls the promise of past generations in the name.
Even fire could not burn the faithful
tree of life, the seed Sinai's founders laid.
No one hurt, the Torahs saved,
the stained glass and *ner tamid*
for almost thirty years have shed the light of memory
and memorial on Windsor Road.
There the building, outgrown
before another quarter century had passed, expanded.
We celebrate our growth, our people, the prayers
we each have voiced, some aloud and some in silence.

2004—Our Jewish life in this prairie state
renews itself and us
through worship, good deeds and charity.
The cycles of our lives confirm
our children and community,
the Jews we are and will continue to be.

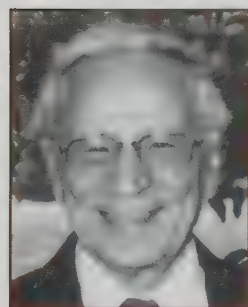
At left, Ruth Youngerman and Arthur Lewis, third-generation members of Sinai Temple,
stand in front of the first Temple's windows in the new Temple's sanctuary reflecting on the
congregation's colorful past. Photo courtesy of the News-Gazette.

*This
Century
of Spirit*

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary

This year we are celebrating our 100th anniversary as a *kehillah kedoshah*, a sacred community. As Louis Jacob put it in *The Jewish Religion*, "there is an element of the sacred when Jews work together for the furtherance of Judaism."

While my personal encounters among our community lead me to assert that we have a good share of *tzaddikim* (righteous persons) among us, it is true as well that we see ourselves at Sinai Temple as the community shul, a second home to all Jews in our area. May we continue in the path we have chosen, to help Jews realize the personal and communal riches of our tradition, and provide a place where they can practice and grow in their Judaism. —**Rabbi Norman Mark Klein**



In the Book of Kings, when King Solomon dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem, he prayed that the Almighty would hear the prayers of all—even the stranger who would come pray at the Temple. And I pray that no one who comes to pray at Sinai Temple will ever feel like a stranger—and that the Almighty will hear the prayers of all who come to our house of worship—young and old, rich and poor, and those who have traveled from near and from afar.

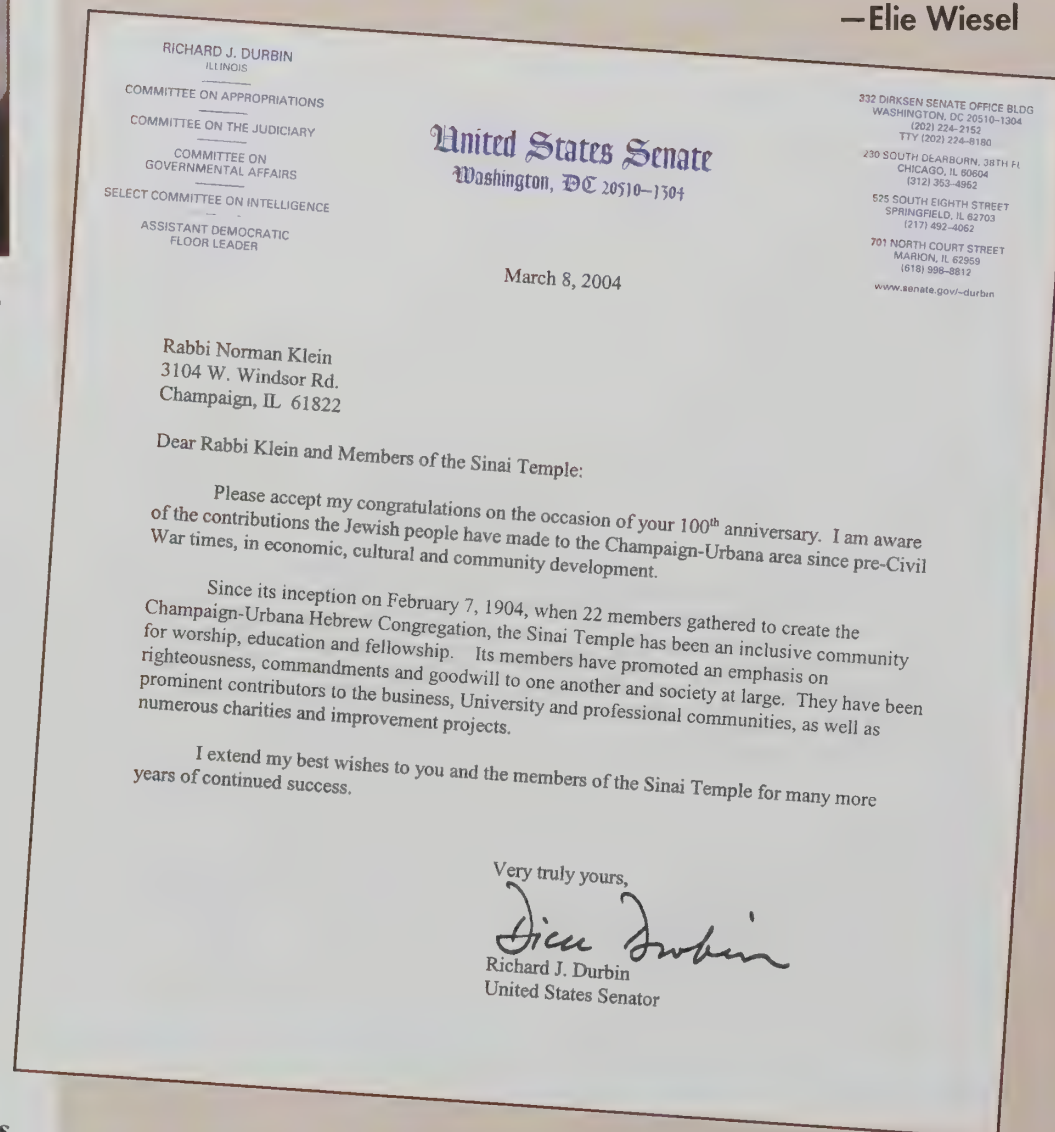
Y'hee ratsohn sh'teesbrab—b'tocheinu ahavah achva reyut v'shalom. And may there be among us love, respect for each other, brotherhood, friendship, and peace. May it be Your will.

—**Rabbi Isaac Neuman, Rabbi Emeritus**

Proclamations

"I marvel at the resilience of the Jewish people. Their best characteristic is their desire to remember. No other people has such an obsession with memory."

—**Elie Wiesel**



• SPRINGFIELD OFFICE
M103A STATE CAPITOL
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62706
PHONE: 217/782-2507
FAX: 217/782-9586

• CONSTITUENT SERVICE OFFICES
1717 PHILO ROAD, SUITE 27
URBANA, IL 61802
PHONE: 217/328-0400
FAX: 217/328-1202

1905-F U.S. ROUTE 150
DANVILLE, IL 61832
PHONE: 217/446-2638
FAX: 217/446-4294

ILLINOIS STATE SENATE



RICHARD J. WINKEL, JR.
STATE SENATOR
52ND DISTRICT

MINORITY SPOKESPERSON
LICENSED ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

MEMBER
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMISSION

• E-MAIL
rickwinkel@rickwinkel.com

February 5, 2004

Sinai Temple Congregation
3104 West Windsor Road
Champaign, IL 61822

RE: 100th Anniversary of the Founding of Sinai Temple

Dear Congregants:

I would like to congratulate the members of Sinai Temple on the 100th anniversary of its founding. It is quite an achievement to reach this milestone and a tribute to your members, both past and present.

Sinai Temple and its congregants have enriched our community with a century of service to our business, university and professional communities. For 100 years, your members have given of their time and talents in support for countless charitable organizations and projects for the improvement and well-being of our community.

Sinai Temple has much to be proud of in its many achievements over the last 100 years, and as the State Senator representing this area, I wish you many more years of continued success.

Best wishes for an enjoyable celebration as you remember the past and plan for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Winkel, Jr.", written over a faint circular stamp.

Richard J. Winkel, Jr.
State Senator
52nd District

RJW/sb

A Letter from the URJ

January 2004—Tevet 5764

Dear members of Sinai Temple,

Commemorating a special occasion in the life of a synagogue is truly a time of great celebration. But a Centennial, One Hundred years, is a time for great joy with voices rising to the heavens and dancing in the streets.

The Union for Reform Judaism is indeed blessed to include in our Union family Sinai Temple of Champaign, Illinois. And what is a blessing but that which keeps us aware of life's holy potential. Every blessing says that "I am grateful to be a creature and to remind myself and G-d that life is good."

And so as you celebrate this important moment in your history, please know that as each blessing is uttered we extend, to you, the boundaries of the sacred and the ritual of love of life.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Donald Berlin, Interim Regional Director

Mimi Dunitz, Assistant Director

Gerard Kaye, Director of Youth and Camping

Proclamation

By The Mayors Of
The Cities Of
Champaign and Urbana, Illinois

- WHEREAS,** There has been a Jewish presence in Champaign-Urbana since pre-Civil War days which has contributed towards the economic development of the communities and on February 7, 1904, 22 members gathered to create the Champaign-Urbana Hebrew Congregation, and exactly 100 years later Sinai Temple is celebrating its 100th year of operation in Champaign-Urbana on February 7, 2004; and
- WHEREAS,** Sinai Temple provides, according to the Jewish faith, an inclusive community that is a place of worship, education and fellowship; and
- WHEREAS,** Sinai Temple promotes an emphasis on righteousness, commandments, and goodwill to one another and society at large; and
- WHEREAS,** Sinai Temple's members have been prominent contributors to our Champaign-Urbana communities during its 100 years of existence; and
- WHEREAS,** Sinai Temple congregants have been an integral and important part of the Champaign, Urbana, Business, University and Professional communities; and
- WHEREAS,** Sinai Temple's congregation have supported and worked for many community charitable organizations and improvement projects in Champaign-Urbana; and
- WHEREAS,** Sinai Temple looks forward to its second century with enthusiasm and vigor to fulfill its purpose and further its good works.
- NOW, THEREFORE, WE,** Gerald J. Schweighart, Mayor of the City of Champaign, Illinois, and Tod Satterthwaite, Mayor of the City of Urbana, Illinois, do hereby proclaim the 100th Year Anniversary of the Sinai Temple and congratulate them as they

CELEBRATE THE PAST AND EMBRACE THE FUTURE

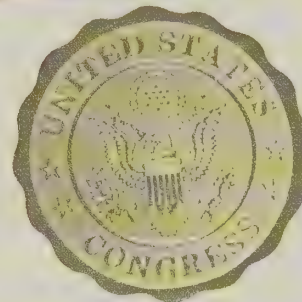
in the Cities of Champaign and Urbana, Illinois.



In Witness Whereof, We have hereunto set our hands and caused the Seals of the Cities of Champaign and Urbana to be affixed this 27th day of January, in the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and four.

Gerald J. Schweighart
MAYOR OF CHAMPAIGN

Tod Satterthwaite
MAYOR OF URBANA



Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition

Presented to the congregation of

Sinai Temple

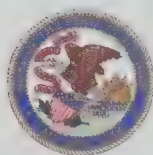
In recognition of your
"100th Anniversary"

Timothy V. Johnson
Member of Congress

February 7, 2004

COMMITTEES

Appropriation Elementary & Secondary Education
Appropriation Higher Education
Development Disabilities & Mental Illness
Elections & Campaign Reform
Higher Education
State Government



NAOMI D. JAKOBSSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 103rd DISTRICT
93rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CAPITOL OFFICE:
284-S Stratton Building
Springfield, IL 62706
217-558-1009
217-557-7680 - FAX

DISTRICT OFFICE:
206 N. Randolph, Suite 120
Champaign, IL 61820
217-373-5000
217-373-8679 - FAX

February 6, 2004

Sinai Temple Congregants
3104 W. Windsor Road
Champaign, IL

Dear Sinai Temple Congregants,

Congratulations to the members of Sinai Temple as you gather on February 7, 2004 to kick off the 100th Anniversary of the formation of your congregation on February 7, 1904. You have for 100 years been an important part of Champaign-Urbana as contributing members to business, professional, university, educational, and civic organizations. You have been supportive of community charitable organizations as well as supporting community public works projects that have improved the quality of life for all of our citizens.

Your logo for the year of celebrating your 100th Anniversary ... Celebrate the Past - Embrace the Future... is very fitting for a congregation that has a wonderful history of which you can be very proud and a future that will continue to meet the religious needs of your faith as well as contributing to the well-being and improvement of the local community.

The coming year of activities in celebration of Sinai Temple's 100 years of operation will be an exciting time for the congregation. Best wishes to the members of Sinai Temple and Rabbi Klein as you celebrate your past and look forward to the future.

Sincerely,

Naomi D. Jakobsson

Naomi D. Jakobsson
State Representative
103rd District

*"For my house shall be called a
house of prayer for all peoples."*

—ISAIAH 54:13

*"Shout unto the Lord, all the earth.
Serve the Lord with gladness;
Come before His presence
with singing.
Know ye that the Lord He is God;
It is He that hath made us,
and we are His,
His people, and the flock of
His pasture."*

—Psalm 100



Left: 100th
Anniversary Gala
Event program

Right: Swinging Through the
Sinai Century April 3, 2005
live auction bid sheet

Live Auction

#1 PICTURE PERFECT

Looking for the perfect Mother's Day gift or the perfect accent to your home décor? Take advantage of this fabulous opportunity from Illini Studio. Round up the family for a sitting, and the final product...a 16x 20 unframed photograph! You'll cherish it forever!

Donor: Jon and Pat Dessen - Illini Studio
Value: \$250

#2 FEELING FIT AND FABULOUS

Keep that New Year's resolution with this six month membership to the Mettler Center...for whole life fitness!

Donor: Mettler Center
Value: \$420

#3 HOME BEAUTIFUL

C. Jane Design is your firm for interior design consultation or help with organizing your home or office! Whether you are starting anew or reinventing. C. Jane Design is your personal connection between concept and completion. Specializing in: space planning, material and color consultation, home makeovers, new home consultation, office makeovers and special event décor!

Donor: C. Jane Design
Value: \$500

#4 CHICAGO WEEKEND GETAWAY

This fantastic package includes a one-night stay at the luxurious Fairmont Hotel, steps away from the new Millennium Park. Includes a pitcher of Sangria and a "taste of Aria" by the chef of the hotel.

Sunday, April 3, 2005
4:00 - 8:30 pm

- 4:00** Silent Auction opens in Davis Chapel.
- 4:00** Time Capsule dedication.
- 4:30-5:30** Religious School history presentation in Sanctuary.
- 5:30-6:30** Dinner is served.
- 6:00** "Drive In" movies for kids begin.
- 6:30** Silent Auction closes.
- 6:45** Live Auction.
- 7:15** Swinging Through the Century Program Historical vignettes.
- 7:45** Drawings for free Sinai Temple membership and religious school tuition.
- 8:00** Check-out from silent and live auction.

Cash, Check, Visa and Master Card accepted.

Followed by Swing Dancing
Instruction by the University Swing Society!

#5 Spritz Jewelry

She'll love this 14K gold and diamond ring — who wouldn't? And, Spritz Jewelers will size this for her at no additional cost. Remember, Mother's Day and Graduation are just around the corner. Here is the perfect gift for the wonderful woman in your life!

Donor: Spritz Jewelers
Value: \$500

#6 SUKKAH SPECTACULAR!

Be their guest. Rabbi and Andrea Klein invite you to join them for dinner in their sukkah. Great food, great company...a very special experience! Dinner for six to eight guests.

Donor: Andrea and Rabbi Klein
Value: Priceless

#7 INDULGE YOURSELF... YOU DESERVE IT!

Indulge in this "Signature Make-Over Package" from BJ's Grand Salon and Spa! Includes: haircut and style, seascape spa manicure, facial, and make-up lesson. This would make an awesome Mother's Day gift!

Donor: BJ's Grand Salon and Spa
Value: \$212

#8 UP, UP, AND AWAY

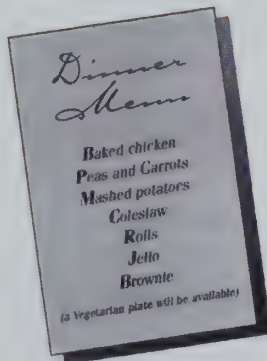
Sweep a loved one off his or her feet...literally! An exciting Garcia's Flying Tomato hot air balloon ride can be yours! Balloon ride to be coordinated with Ralph Senn and is, of course, subject to weather conditions!

Donor: Ralph Senn
Value: Soaring Memories

#9 PUTTING ON THE RITZ...ILLINI STYLE

He'll be proud to wear this men's navy blazer and support our very own University of Illinois! This is an official NCAA licensed apparel item, with gold buttons sporting the U of I crest and a handsome Illini lining. Wear it with pride and always in good taste! The winner selects his size.

Donor: Jos. Kuhn & Company
Value: \$350



All those attending are encouraged to dress in any period costume from the last 100 years! It can be a flapper dress, a zoot suit, a '50s poodle skirt, a disco outfit, or your power suit from the '80s!

Sinai Temple Military Veterans

Compiled by Allen Avner

Research by the National Museum of American Jewish Military History indicates that, from the Revolutionary War to the present, Jewish men and women have served in the armed forces of the United States in every war in numbers greater than would be expected from their representation in the U. S. population. The incomplete list below recognizes all known past and present members of Sinai Temple who served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, plus members who served during World War II in the armies of our allies. It includes veterans in wars ranging from the Civil War to the second Gulf War.

Following each name is the war or era during which the person was on active duty. Where known, the arm in which the service was performed is indicated by an abbreviation described in the notes that follow.

Notes: *= wounded in action; **= killed in action;
USA = U.S. Army; USAAF = U.S. Army Air Forces (WW II); USAF = U.S. Air Force; USMC = U.S. Marine Corps; USN = U.S. Navy; WAC = Women's Army Corp (U. S. Army, WW II); WAVE = Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (U.S. Navy, WW II)

Frank **ADLEMAN**, Korean War, USAF
Jerome A. **APRILL**, WW II, USA
Richard Allen **AVNER**, Vietnam War, USA
Edwin Melvin **BANKS**, WW II, USN
Paul H. **BARON**, WW II
Carl **BELBER**, Vietnam War, USA
Morris **BERG**, WW II, USN
Martin **BLAKE**, USA
Edward **BLOOM**, WW II, USA
Irvin **BLOOM**, WW II, USA**
Daniel **BLOOMFIELD**, Cold War, USN
Morton A. **BLUM**, WW II
Sam **BOORSTEIN**, WW II
Isidore (Irving) **BRILL**, WW II
Kathy **BRILL**, Gulf War II, USA
Martin B. **BRILL**, WW II, USAAF
Ellis H. **BROWN**, WW II
Ernest **BROWN**, WW II
Helen L. **BROWN**, WW II, USA (WAC)
Morris **BROWN**, WW II, USA
Max **CARON**, WW II, USA
Anne M. **COHEN**, WW II, USA (WAC)
Julius B. **COHEN**, WW I, USA
Raymond R. **COHEN**, WW II
Sidney N. **COHEN**, WW I, USA
Solomon B. **COHEN**, WW I, USA
Al **DAVIS**, Vietnam War, USA
Leonard Norman **DAVIS**, Korean War, USAF
William Wiley **DECKARD**, Cold War & Vietnam War, USN
John D. **DOOLEY**, WW II*

David A. **DOOLIN**, Cold War & Gulf War I, USA
Howard S. **DUCOFF**, WW II, USA
William **EGHERMAN**, Korean War, USA
Harry **EISENBERG**, WW II, USA
Leonard **FEINBERG**, WW II
Marvin M. **FRANK**, WW II, USAAF
Alvin D. **GEFFERT**, WW II
Abraham **GINSBERG**, WW II, Canadian Army
Milton R. **GLASER**, Korean War, USAF
Samuel Isaac **GOLDBERG**, WW II, Canadian Army
Joseph P. **GOLDBERG**, Vietnam War, USA
Louis F. **GORDON**, WW II, USA
Iakov **GORODINSKI**, WW II, Soviet Army
Joseph C. **GOULD**, Jr., WW II, USA
Robert **GREEN**, WW II, USN
Marshall 'Mic' **GREENBERG**, Cold War, USA
Leonard **GREENMAN**, WW II, USMC
Myron **GREENMAN**, Korean War, USA
Morris **GROSSMAN**, WW II
Alvin **HAMBURG**, WW II, USA
David S. **HAMBURG**, WW II, USN; Korean War, USA
Joseph **HAMBURG**, WW II, USA*
Russell W. **HAYS**, WW II, USAAF
Theodore **HYMOWITZ**, Cold War, USA
Leopold **JUDAH**, WW II
Jerome **KAUFMAN**, Vietnam War, USAF
Stanley L. **KAUFMAN**, WW II
Norman T. **KIELL**, WW II
Lawrence **KLEIN**, WW II

Blair B. **KLING**, Korean War, USA
 Viola **KOENIGSBERG**, WW II, USA (WAC)
 Alfred **KOHEN**, WW II
 Alfred **KOHN**, WW II, USAAF
 Norman R. **KOHN**, WW II, USA
 Meyer **KRAMSKY**, WW II
 Joseph **KUHN**, Civil War
 Aaron **KURLAND**, WW II, USN
 Nathan Haim **KUZNETSOV**, WW II,
 Soviet Army
 Arnold H. **LEAVITT**, WW II
 Stanley R. **LEVY**, Cold War, USA
 Ronald **LEVY**, Korean War, USAF
 Allen **LEWIN**, WW II, USA
 Arthur **LEWIS**, WW II, USA
 Leo **LEWIS**, WW II, USN
 Ben **LIBMAN**, WW I, USA
 Robert **LIBMAN**, Vietnam War, USA
 Albert A. **LIEBOVICH**, WW II, USA
 Abraham **LOEB**, Civil War, 6th Ky Inf
 Morris **LOWENSTERN**, Civil War
 Louis D. **MANN**, WW II, USA
 Werner **MARX**, WW II, USN
 Herbert J. **MEIS**, WW II, USAAF
 Hershel **MEIS**, WW II, USA
 Boris **MIRENSKY**, WW II, Soviet Army
 Ralph **NEWMAN**, Korean War, USAF
 Richard J. **NEWMAN**, WW II, USN
 Kenneth M. **OBER**, Korean War, USA
 Kenneth R. **OLSON**, Vietnam War, USA
 Alfred H. **REICHMAN**, WW II

Philip Edward **REICHMAN**, WW II, USA
 Lee **REINEBERG**, Jr., WW II, USA
 Bernard **REYNOLDS**, WW II, USA
 Albert D. **REZITS**, WW I, USA
 Joseph M. **REZITS**, WW II
 Albert Edward **RIGBERG**, WW II, USAAF
 Lionel O. 'Rick' **ROMERO**, Korean War, USAF
 Sidney **ROSEN**, WWII, USAAF
 Myer Joseph **ROSENFELD**, WW II, USA
 Barak **ROSENSHINE**, USA
 G. Myron **SAMISCH**, WW II
 Henry W. **SCHWARTZ**, WW II, USA
 Carl A. **SELIGMAN**, WW II
 Lester G. **SELIGMAN**, WW II, USA
 Demitri B. **SHIMKIN**, WW II, USA
 Gilbert **SHMIKLER**, WW II, USAAF
 Raymond **SHMIKLER**, WW II, USAAF
 Myron J. **SHOLEM**, WW II
 Ivens A. **SIEGEL**, Korean War, USA
 Charles O. **SILVERMAN**, WW II
 Harold M. **SIMON**, WW II
 Jack A. **SIMON**, WW II, USAAF
 Robert D. **SIMON**, WW II, USA
 Max **SIMON**, WW II
 Erwin **SMALL**, WW II, USMC
 Dan L. **SMITH**, Vietnam War, USA
 Alex **SORKIN**, Vietnam War, USA
 Frederick **STEIGMANN**, WW II, USN
 Albert W. **STERN**, WW II, USA
 Eugene **STERN**, WW II, USA
 Marjorie Gould **STERN**, WW II, USN (WAVE)

Walter Wolf **STERN**, Jr, WW II, USAAF
 Seymour **SUDMAN**, Korean War, USA
 Lewis **TANNER**, WW II, USA
 Andrea H. **TALLEY**, Cold War, USAF
 Edward S. **TALLEY**, Cold War, USA
 James A. **TALLEY**, Jr., Cold War &
 Gulf War I, USN
 James A. **TALLEY**, III, Gulf War I &
 Gulf War II, USA
 Maury K. **TOPOLOSKY**, USN
 Suzanne A. **WANNEMUEHLER**, Cold War &
 Gulf War I, USA
 Paul M. **WEICHSEL**, Korean War, USA
 Jon **WEISBAUM**, Gulf War I, USN
 Leo **WEISEL**, WW II, USN
 Irving **WEISSMAN**, WW II
 Arthur **WESTLE**, Cold War &
 Vietnam War, USAF
 John **WINDMULLER**, WW II
 Rudi **WINDMULLER**, WW II
 Edward **WINKLER**, WW II
 William M. **YOUNGERMAN**, WW II, USAAF
 Milton **ZIBEL**, WW II

The Simons serve in 1941: l. to r., Capt. Harold, Lenore, Jack (Field Artillery), Abraham, and Robert (ROTC).



Sinai Temple Membership List

**Compiled by Lisa Libman
and Allen Avner**

The following list represents those persons who were members of Sinai Temple in 2004 and shows the year in which they joined the Congregation. All those listed through 1954 were honored at the Gala Dinner for being members for at least fifty years. Names in parentheses are deceased spouses of blessed memory.

*Deceased since 2004.

1929

Bea Tepper* (Manie)

1936

Ruth Youngerman (William)

Fay Tepper* (Max)

1939

Arthur & Norma Lewis

1940

Helen Levin (Ezra)

1942

Chester Siess* (Helen)

1943

Carlyn Gottschalk* (Kurt)

1945

Audrey Leavitt* (Arnold)

1949

Esther Steinberg (Marvin)

Sonia Weissman (Irving)

1950

Myron & Sonya Sholem

Mira Hamburg (Alvin)

1951

Joseph & Merle Hamburg

1952

Edward* & Loretta Dessen

Bernice Wax* (Nelson)

Isaac & Ruth Morhaim

Edythe Davis (Cecil)

Anne Weisel (Leo)

1954

Aaron & Jewel Kurland

Beverly Caron* (Max)

Richard & Shirley Newman

1957

Howard Ducoff (Rose)

Hilda Banks (Edwin)

Helen Greenstein (Carl)

1958

Sidney* & Dorothy Rosen

1959

Jack A. Simon*

Abraham & Jean* Ginsberg

1960

Peter & Judy (1999) Braunfeld

1961

Marilyn E. Trupin
 Ronald & Joyce Levy
 Arthur Robinson
 Edward & Eva Blum

1962

Edward & Nancy Tepper

1963

Morton & Marian Wagman
 Tauby Heller Shimkin (Demitri)
 Blair & Julia Kling
 Paul & Linda (1984) Weichsel
 Miles & Barbara Klein

1964

Donald & Joli Ginsberg
 Bebbe Mandel (Eli)
 George & Mary Perlstein
 Howard* & Freda Birnbaum
 Marlene Goodfriend
 Jean Talley

1965

Brenda Lerner Berg & Morris* (1988) Berg
 Edward M. & Elaine C. Bruner
 Elliot Weinberg & Rosalind Faiman Weinberg
 Eleanor Blum
 Anne Martel

Arthur Lerner

Joyce Nagel (Stuart)
 Aaron & Trudy Averbuch
 John Walter (Jane)

1966

Michael and Buddi Tepper

1967

Irene Slottow (Gene)
 William & Lisa (1978) Libman
 Robert & Sondra (1982) Libman
 Michael Shapiro & Elizabeth Klein
 Annette Karsh
 Ted Hymowitz
 Ann Einhorn
 Stephen & Anita Hamburg
 Bob Eisenstein (Laura)
 Carol & Yoram (1984) Mizrahi

1968

Boris* & Lilian Katz
 Henrietta Schwartz
 Ira Carmen
 Paul & Susan Schomer
 Eugene Greenberg
 Stanley & Joan Levy
 Blanche Sudman (Seymour)
 Sandra Carmen

1969

Michael Grossman
 Lester* & Judy Seligman
 Markham & Ann Sapoznik
 Eva Rosenfield (Myer)

1970

Jerome & Judith Kaufman
 William & Fran Strauss
 Daniel Bloomfield* (Frances)
 Frank & Marilyn Adleman

1971

Nicole Storch* (Stephen)

1972

Ira & Cecile Lebenson
 Robert & Sherry Steigmann
 Barry & Linda (2001) Weiner
 Sybelle Timberlake
 Sandy & Abbie Helman
 William & Reva Egherman
 Julian & Natalie Frankenberg

1973

Judith Ullom
 Judy Bach (Paltiel)

1974

Annette H. Schoenberg
I. David & Mary Ann Berg
Leslie Marsh Mason & Gary (1995) Mason
Roger A. Marsh
Charles & Joan Kozoll
Rabbi Isaac & Eva (1988) Neuman

1975

Perry Kohn
John & Annette Buckmaster
Fred & Diane Gottheil
Carl & Carol Belber
Astrid Berkson
Allan & Merle Levy
Kenneth Stolarsky & Andrea Beller (1979)
Gary & Fraeda Porton
John & Bette van Es
Maurice & Barbara Friedberg
Joseph & Marganit Rotman

1976

Wiley & Paula* Deckard
Leonard & Roberta Heumann
Ira & Lynn Wachtel

1977

Ehud & Janie Yairi
Raymond & Betty Fish
Helen Thursh

1978

John & Benita Katzenellenbogen
William & Eileen Kohen
David & Jan Sholem
Arnold & Rita Blockman
Barbara & Penn Nelson
David Meyer

1979

Evan & Lee Melhado
Stephen & Linda Bauer
Jack & Laurel Schnitzer
Anthony & Penelope Soskin
Brian Silverman & Ilene Corman Silverman
Dennis & Iryce Baron
Erwin Small
Ivens (Naomi) Siegel

1980

Steve & Miriam Booth
Steven & Sharon Willette

1981

Bob Stewart & Karen Aprill
Marianne Ferber
Alexander Scheeline & Alice Berkson
Ellen Swengel
Suzanne Trupin & Stanley Johnson

1982

David & Kazuko Goodman
Aaron & Mildred Rosenberg

1983

Ronald & Carol Chabot
Pam Olson
Ron Toby
Stanley & Sarah Wasserman

1984

Barak Rosenshine
Diana Lenik
Michael & Laurie Goldwasser
David & Carole Sinow
Sherry Helfer

1985

Alice Novak
May Berenbaum & Richard Leskosky
Tony Novak
Karen & Geoffrey Ray
Maury & Janis Topolosky
Harris & Jeanette Lewin
Louis & Shirley Liebovich
William D. Youngerman
Richard & Judith Kaplan

1986

Robert F. Rich
Ruth Steigmann* (Frederick)
Samuel Kamin
Nancy & David Hertzog

1987

Jonathan Trupin
Brian Kahn
Mark & Cynthia Strauss
Brian & Terre Braun

1988

Arthur & Charlotte Westle
Robin Goettel
Michael & Sheri Langendorf
Cindy Mall
Richard Pikowsky
Matthew & Eleanor Finkin
Brian Ross & Cheri Sullivan
A. Ralph Senn
Hank & Elizabeth Walter

1989

Ray & Rae Spooner
Charles Kahn & Virginia France
Gene & Julia Robinson
Allen & Elaine Avner
Robert & Marion Smith

1990

Harry Liebersohn
Joan M. Friedman & Charles Blair
Serge & Nina Krasavin
Debra Karplus
Marshall Greenberg & Lee Egherman
Robert Ferrer
Jennifer Klatsky
Alan & Lynne Grusby
Steven Morris & Lynn Barnett Morris
Samuel Feinberg

1991

Stephen Downie & Deborah Katz-Downie
Hilary Frooman & John Lee
Bart & Barbara Taub
Gertrude Kushner

1992

John B. Kogut & Laurien Laufman
Susan Teicher
Susan Cohen
Robert & Joanne Manaster
Mark Stolkin
Karin & James Imlay
Joel & Susan Crames
Michael & Michelle Shmikler
Michael & Janet LeRoy

1993

Laura H. Greene
Irma Reiner
Achsah Guibbory
Rocky David Maffit & Katherine Diane Kuper
David & Mary Ann Goldberg
Nigel Goldenfeld & Joan Campagnolo
George & Ondine Gross

1994

Kal Alston
Alice & Brendan McGinty
Adrienne Perlman
Donna Warwick
Daniel & Eileen Lichtblau
Ben & Olga Halpern
Jonathan & Patricia Dessen
Firouz & Nasrin Gahvari
Joseph & Elizabeth Pleck
Faye Lesht
Leslie & Sherrie Levy
Brian & Susan McQuaid
Lisa Busjahn

1995

Larry & Alaina Kanfer
Paul & Mary Friedman
Marjorie Harris
Robert Silverman
Lianne Anderson

1995 continued

Andrea Press & Bruce Williams
Jacob Woolfson
Sandra Molasky
Michael & Leah Jay
Robin & Scott Stoller
Harriett Buscombe
Rabbi Norman & Andrea Klein
Scott Krutsinger & Rachel Rohr-Krutsinger
Florence Gottlieb*

1996

Michael & Adrenne Dietchweiler
David Shapiro
Frances J. & Mitchell Harris
James Pfander & Laurie Mikva
Mark Steinberg & Jane Hedges
Helen Kuznetsov
Helaine Silverman
Elizabeth Weiss
John A. Davis & Terri Gitler
Jerome* & Nita* Aprill
Frederic Jaher
Jon & Kathryn Weisbaum
Alvan Bregman & Caroline Haythornthwaite

1997

Greg Muchnik & April Keaton
Bernice Lieberman
Mara Wade (Ken Ober)
Stephen & Kathryn Marshak
Todd Peck & Amy Carmen-Peck
Sheila Reed
Richard & Sumie Burten
Elyse Rosenbaum & Robert Smith
Drora & Matti Shalev
Scott & Susan Lerner
Dave & Rosalie Gross
Marshall & Karen Lee Garrick
Philip & Jean Freedman

1998

Howard Berenbaum & Megan McLaughlin
Sara Lampert Hoover
Dana Rabin & Craig Koslofsky
Anne M. Heiles
Jon (Cody) Sokolski & Marci Dodds
David Green & Harriet Bursztyn
Dan & Michal Roth
Ruth Sarah Hoberman & Richard Anthony
Sylvia
Emily Pall & Kenneth A. Spelke
Rudi & Judi Laufhutte

1999

Olga Gorodinski (Iakov)
Joanna Kling
Michelle Perry
William & Phyllis Gingold
Andrew Mark Isserman & Ellen Jacobsen-
Isserman
Arne Jacob Pearlstein & Elizabeth Jane Stern
Stacy Deckard
Robert E. & Bette S. Green
Allen Poteshman & Sumie Okazaki
Joseph P. & Andrea M. Goldberg
Michael & Amy Weisbach
Hagit Itzkowitz
Mark Robert & Iris Band

2000

Ali Yazdani & Adele Eva Goldberg
Dara Goldman
Tamra Gingold
Frances Rigberg Baker
Suzanne Ashley-Wannemuehler
Steven J. Scher
David & Janice Saks
Thomas & Susan Falender
Peter Siegel & Hope Stevens
Ralph & Beverly Newman
Sharon Shavitt & Steven Zimmerman
Julia Rietz

J. Barlow Le Vold & Lisa Ann Romero
Natalie W. Kramer
Jason Art Stoller & Miranda Wilcox Bauman

2001

Sarra Khamarmer
David A. Grimley
Michael & Brigit Madonick
Dori G. & Douglas Walker
Rebecca & Noble Newman
Melissa & Timothy Cronin
Marc & Avigail Snir
Stanley & Ethel Depper
James Solomon & Rona Fingold
Helena Karam-Shilts
Susan & Paul Donohue
Josh & Lynn Mervis
Chris & Tracy Hall
Ivens & Jean Siegel

2002

Abigail Jahiel & Thomas Lutze
Lauren Senoff & Michael Woolf
Nancy Abelmann & Andrew Gewirth
Jane Valentine
Warner Rubnitz Ferratier
Gary & Beth Slotnick
Bruce Rosenstock & Harriet Murav
Allison Fromm Entrekin
Benjamin Lapid & Hana Inbar

Laura & Anthony Bleill
Alan & Jane Nathan
Karen D. Rudolph & David Donnini
Steven Karten
Dan L. Smith
Larry Adelston
Sharon & Adam Faier
Isaiah & Veronica Shavitt
Florence E. Klein
Randall & Jill Rosenbaum
Barak & Sharon Gablinger
Larry & Ann Ribstein

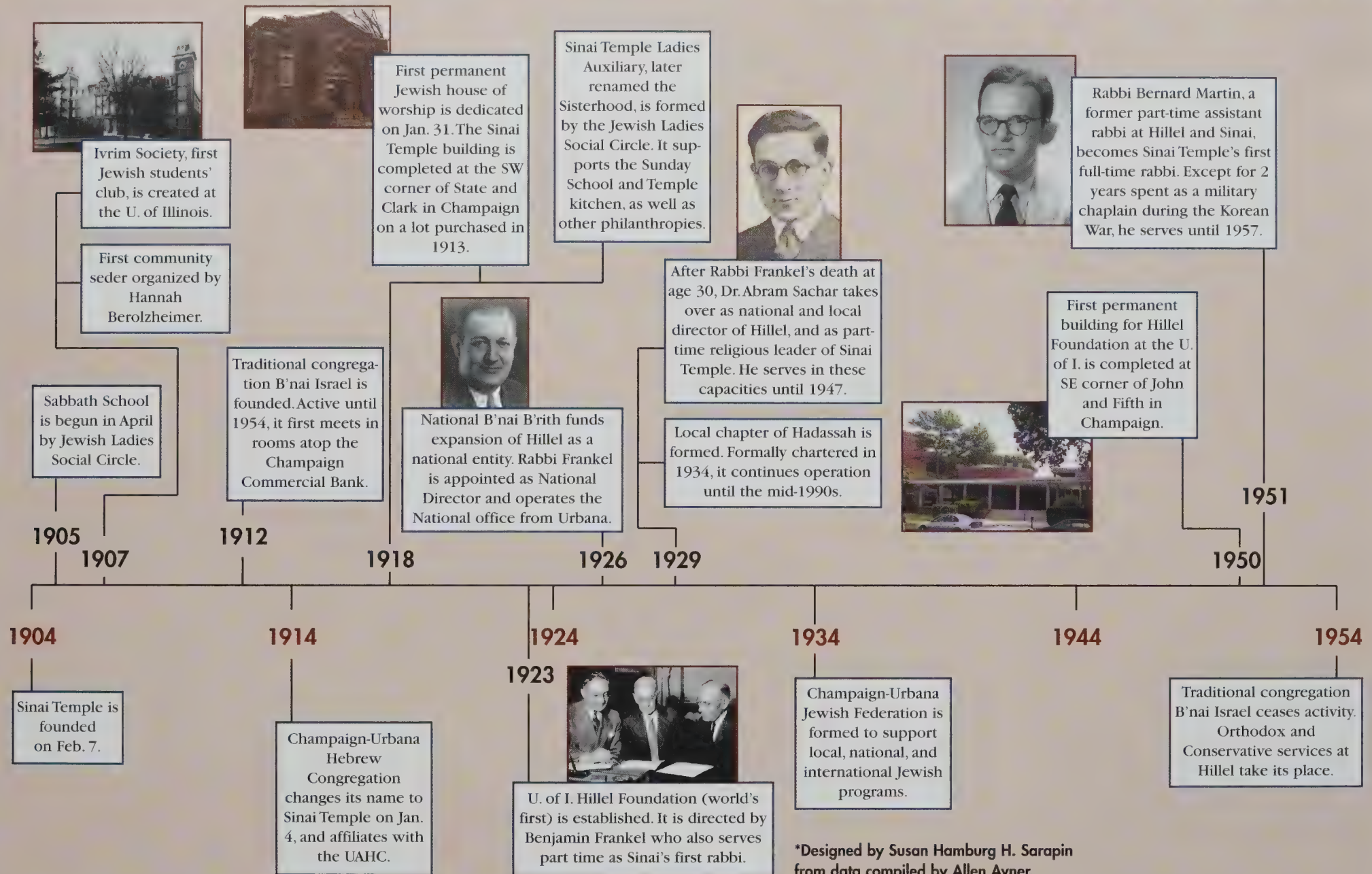
2003

Ted & Lynda Steen
Orna & Natan Beker
Shoshanna Bauer-Macaraeg &
Matthew Macaraeg
Emanuel & Isabel Pastreich
Elizabeth Lipson
Gwendolyn Costa & Daniel Jacobsohn
Wynne Sandra Korr & Donald Brieland
Dov Cohen & Andrea Aguiar
Sara T. & Ryan Harkins
Inna & Vadim Zharnitsky
Liliya Bekker
Mark & Marcie Wiener
Beri & Joel Schwitzer
Polya Gorelik
Leslie Rose Cooperband & Wesley M. Jarrell

2004

Morton & Rhoda Chonoles
Laura Steigmann Kanis
Andrew & Elissa Libman
Michelle Paisley
Dwan & Aaron Katz
Morris Berenbaum*
Hy & Gussie* Danowitz
Gordon Hutner & Dale Bauer
Richard & Jacqueline Ross
Marvin Gerstein
Ronald & Leanna Cossman
Arthur & Marcia Monaco Siegel
David Sussman & Kirstin Wilcox

Sinai Temple's Timeline

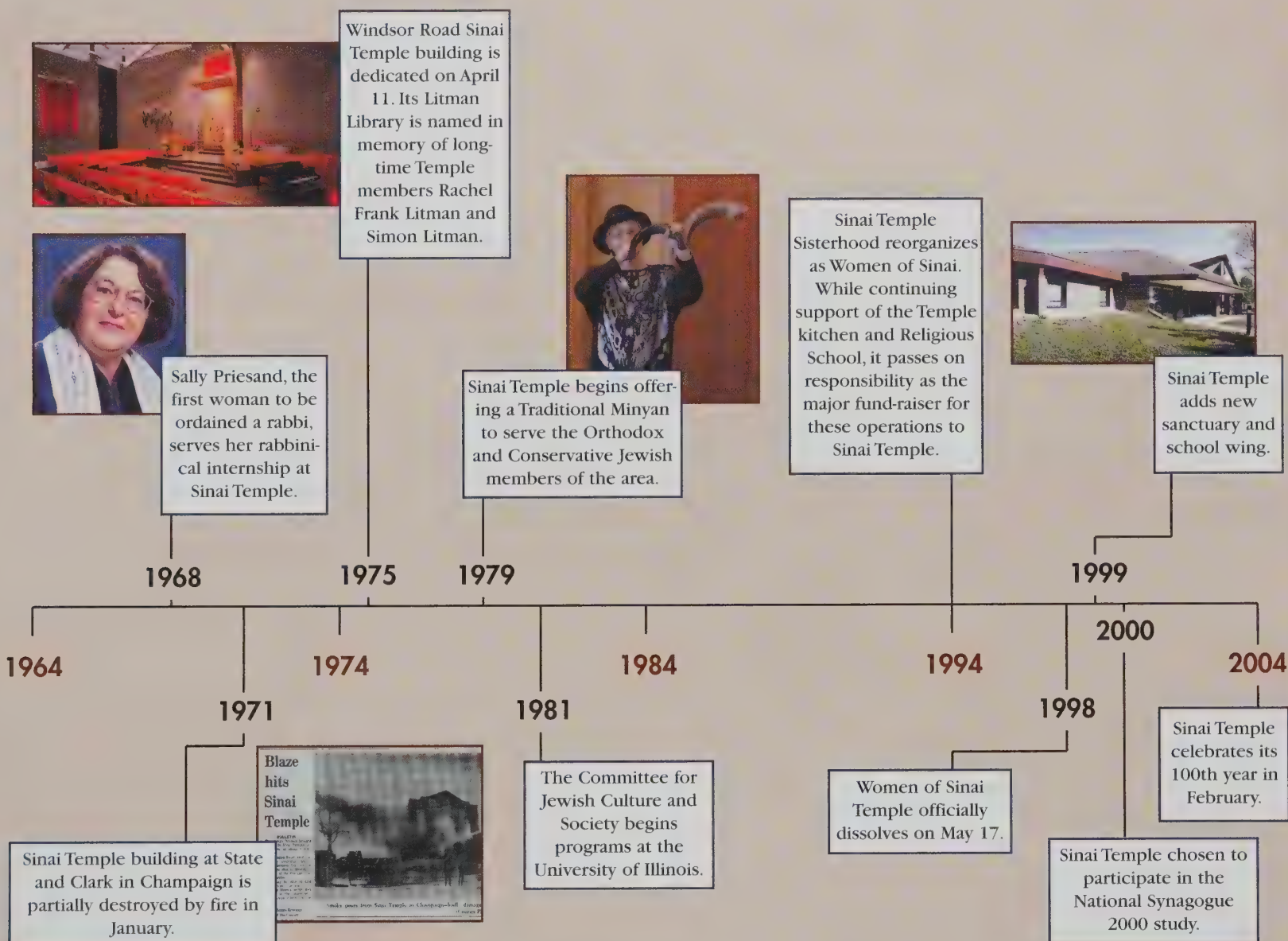


*Designed by Susan Hamburg H. Sarapin
from data compiled by Allen Avner.

of Events: 1904-2004*

C-U Jewish History Prior to 1904

- 1854 Solomon Bernstein is the first permanent Jewish settler in Urbana. In 1855, he marries Fanny Wertheimer from Ohio.
- 1857 The Bernsteins' daughter Fanny is first Jewish child born in the community.
- 1861 Brothers Nathan and Abraham Stern are the first permanent Jewish settlers in Champaign.
- 1867 Ahavath Achim, a benevolent burial society, is formed in Champaign. It merges with B'nai B'rith in 1887.
- 1868 Ahavath Achim buys land for a Jewish cemetery at the SE corner of Cunningham & Perkins in Urbana.
- 1870 Hattie Kahn, daughter of Hanna and Nathan, dies on Aug. 1. Her grave is the first in the new Jewish cemetery.
- 1877 B'nai B'rith Grand Prairie Lodge 281 is founded in Champaign-Urbana.
- 1889 The Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society is formed. Active until about 1891.
- 1894 Jewish Ladies Social Circle is founded.
- 1895 Yom Kippur services are the first recorded public Jewish religious services in the community.
- 1898 Urbana Jewish cemetery is closed. All burials are moved to a Jewish section of Mount Hope Cemetery.





Our Heritage... Our Children... Our Future.

Top left: Rabbi Isaac Neuman and the consecration class of 1985. Bottom: Rabbi Brad Bloom and his consecration class of 1987. Top right: Rabbi Norman Klein with his consecration class of 2000. Photos by Illini Studio.

Our Own Stories

Our Own Stories

Index

NOTE: References to individuals shown in pictures are given in **bold**. Author entries are given in *italic*. Page numbers separated by a dash indicate continued discussion of the entry; page numbers separated by commas indicate isolated citations.

Abelmann, Nancy, 217
 Adams, John, 134
 Adelman, Julie, **95**
 Adelston, Larry, 217
 Adleman, Frank, 210, 213
 Adleman, Marilyn (Mrs. Frank), 213
 Aguiar, Andrea, 217
Abavat Achim, 81
 Alpiner, Agatha, 12
 Alpiner, Amelia, 4, 12
 Alpiner, Henrietta, 4
 Alpiner, Solomon, 4
 Alsfelder, Barbara, 5
 Alsfelder, Phil, 13
 Alston, Kal, 215
 Altabe, Albert, Ben, 37
 American Red Cross and Jewish Ladies Social Circle, 22
 Anderson, Benedict, 116
 Anderson, Lianne, **65**, 215
 Anti-Semitism in housing in Champaign, 139
 Aprill, Jerome A., 210, 216
 Aprill, Karen, 214
 Aprill, Nita (Mrs. Jerome), 216
 Ashley-Wannemuehler, Suzanne, 211, 216
 Assimilation
 earliest known Jewish resident, 4

early Champaign-Urbana Jews and, 3
 Jews in Champaign-Urbana, 1
 Sinai Temple founders and, xi
 Aufrecht, Professor, 135
 Averbuch, Aaron, viii, ix, xvi, xvii, 125, 184, 187, 188, 197, 213
 Averbuch, Trudy (Mrs. Aaron), 213
 Avner, Elaine (Mrs. Allen), viii, ix, xvi, xvii, 215
 Avner, Richard Allen, viii, ix, xvi, xvii, 80-86, 81, 98, 151, 210, 210-211, 212-217, 215, 218-219

B

Bach, Judy (Mrs. Paltiel), 25, 213
 Bach, Paltiel, 213
 Bacharach, Herman, 81
 Backus, Mrs. Etta Cohen, 26
 Baer, Emma C., 13
 Baer, Mrs. B., 14
 Baker, Aaron, **155**
 Baker, Frances Rigberg, 216
 Baker, Sidney, **155**
 Baldwin, Professor Chauncey, 17, 27, 34, 136, 139
 Balka, Christie, 102
 Band, Iris (Mrs. Mark), 216
 Band, Mark Robert, 216
 Bankier, Fela, xviii, 52
 Bankier, Leon, xviii, 52
 Bankier-Booth family, xiv
 Banks, Edwin Melvin, 210, 212
 Banks, Hilda (Mrs. Edwin), ix, xvii, **65**, **195**, 212
 Barak. See Brown family
 Barnett, Carol, 197
 Baron, Dennis, 214
 Baron, Iryce (Mrs. Dennis), 214
 Baron, Paul H., 210
 Bartlett, Colonel S. P., 9
 Bauer, Dale, 217
 Bauer, Linda (Mrs. Stephen), 214
 Bauer, Stephen, 214
 Bauer-Macaraeg, Shoshanna, 217
 Bauman, Miranda Wilcox, 217
 Beck, Evelyn Torton, 101, 105
 Beker, Natan, 217
 Beker, Orna (Mrs. Natan), 217
 Bekker, Liliya, xv, xvi, xvii, 217
 Belasco, David, 8
 Belber, Carl, 210, 214
 Belber, Carol (Mrs. Carl), viii, xv, xvi, 87, 210, 214
 Beller, Andrea, 214
 Benet, William Rose, 146
 Berenbaum, Howard, 216
 Berenbaum, May, viii, xv, 214
 Berenbaum, Morris, 217
 Berg, Brenda Lerner (Mrs. Morris), 213
 Berg, I. David, 214
 Berg, Mary Ann (Mrs. I. David), 214
 Berg, Morris, 210, 213
 Bergman, Alvan, 216
 Berkowitz, Rabbi, 45
 Berkson, Alice, viii, xvi, 68, 85, 88-91, 184, 214
 Berkson, Astrid, 214
 Berkson family, xiv
 Berkson, Ralph, 2, **196**
 Berkson, Ruth (Mrs. Ralph), 2, 49, 51, **64**, 68, 87, 156, 160
 Berlin, Rabbi Donald, 206
 Berman, Cora, 19
 Berman, Edward, 37
 Bernstein, Addie, 8
 Bernstein, Julius, 84

Bernstein, Mrs. Solomon, 14
 Bernstein, Solomon, 7, 8, 81
 daughter of, 7
 Bernstein, Theresa, 14
 Berolzheimer, Beulah, 16, 19, 20, 93, 97
 Berry, Dave, 98
 Bing, Carrie, 14
 Bing, Isaac, 81
 Bing, Jonas, 81
 Bing, Mrs. Jonas, 14
 Bing, Mrs. L. L., 14
 Bing, Mrs. Sarah, 26
 Birnbaum, Freda (Mrs. Howard), 91, 213
 Birnbaum, Howard, 91, 213
 Blaine, James G., 8
 Blair, Charles, 215
 Blake, Martin, 210
 Bleill, Anthony, 217
 Bleill, Laura (Mrs. Anthony), 217
 Bloch, Babette, 4
 Blockman, Arnold, 214
 Blockman, Rita (Mrs. Arnold), viii, 214
 Bloom, Captain Irvin, 151, **151**, 210
 Bloom, Edward Alan, 151, 210
 Bloom, Leah, 62
 Bloom, Linda (Mrs. Brad), 62, 78
 Bloom, Morton A. 210
 Bloom, Rabbi Brad, 61-65, 62, 74, 78-79, **78**, 101,
 110, **183**, 186, 187, 198, **199**, **220**
 Bloom, Rabbi I. Mortimer, 30
 Bloomfield, Clara Derber, v, xiv
 Bloomfield, Daniel, 210, 213
 Bloomfield, Frances (Mrs. Daniel), 213
 Blum, Edward, 213
 Blum, Eleanor, 65, 213

Blum, Eva (Mrs. Edward), **179**, 213
 Blum family, xiv
 Blum, Henry, 24, **116**
 Blum, Morton A., 210
 Blumenthal, Mrs. I., 14
 Blumenthal, Mrs. S., 14
 B'nai B'rith and Hillel Foundation, 33-34
 B'nai B'rith Grand Prairie Lodge No. 281
 founding, 13
 and Kuhn, Isaac, 7
 and Stern, Abe, 4
 Board of Trustees of Sinai Temple and centennial
 year, xvii
 Bomzer, Estie, 197
 Book committee, ix
 Boorstein, Sam, 210
 Booth, Miriam (Mrs. Steve), 214
 Booth, Steve, 214
 Brandeis, Supreme Court Justice Louis, 35
 Brandeis University, Abram Leon Sachar and, 143
 Braun, Brian, 215
 Braun, Terre (Mrs. Brian), 215
 Braunfeld, Judy (Mrs. Peter), viii, xv, 212
 Braunfeld, Peter, 212
 Bredman, J., 13
 Bregman, Alvan, 216
 Brichford, Maynard, 3
 Brieland, Donald, 217
 Brill, Carol, 160
 Brill, Isidore (Irving), 210
 Brill, Kathy, 210
 Brill, Martin B., 210
 Brodsky, Dan, **150**
 Brodsky, Jack, 166, 178
 Brodsky, Lois (Mrs. Jack), 87, 166

Brotherson, Don [Mary Lou], 51, **51**, 59, 63, **177**,
 179, 181, 196
 Brown, Benjamin, 152, **152**, 153
 Brown, Dorothy, 153
 Brown, Ellis H., 210
 Brown, Ernest, 210
 Brown family, **134**
 Brown, Harry, 153
 Brown, Helen L., 153, 210
 Brown, Loretta, 153
 Brown, Louie, **152**, 153
 Brown, Miriam, 152
 Brown, Morris, 153, 210
 Brown, Rose, 153
 Brown-Caron family, xiv
 Bruner, Edward M., ix, *115-133*, 213
 Bruner, Elaine C. (Mrs. Edward), 213
 Buckmaster, Annette (Mrs. John), viii, 214
 Buckmaster, John, 214
 Burial Society
 burial and ritual practices, 83-85
 cemetery today, 85-86
 demographic and cultural factors, 82-83
 first burial, 82
 first change in management, 83
 founding, 13, 80-82
 moving, 83
 new *Chevra Kadisha*, 85
 Burnham Hospital and Jewish Ladies Social Circle,
 15
Burning Bush stained glass panel, 197
 Bursztyn, Harriet, 216
 Burt, Jennie Lowenstern, 19
 Burt, Mrs. J. W., 14, 15, 21
 Burten, Richard, 216

Burten, Sumie (Mrs. Richard), 216
Buscombe, Harriett, 216
Busjahn, Lisa, xvi, ix, 101-105, 101, 103, 215

C

Cadman, Charles, 146
Campagnolo, Joan, 215
Cannon, Joe, 8
Carmen, Ira, 213
Carmen, Sandra, 213
Carmen-Peck, Amy, 216
Carolsfeld, Julius Schnoor, x
Caron, Beverly (Mrs. Max), xvi, 197, 212
Caron, Max, 210, 212
Carrezo, Teresa, 8
Carter, President Jimmy, 73
Centennial committees, viii
Centennial year of Sinai Temple
 accomplishments, xv-xvi
 activities, xiii
 dinner dance, xvi
 first planning for, xiii
 gala dinner, xiii, xv
 history book, xvi-xvii
 new Torah, xiii
 unsung heroes, xvii
Chabad Center, 67
Chabot, Carol (Mrs. Ronald), 214
Chabot, Ronald, 214
Chagall, Marc, x, 114
Champaign County, first Jewish burial society and
 cemetery in, 80-86
Champaign-Urbana. *See also* Urbana, West Urbana
 anti-Semitism in, 139
 Champaign business district growth, 136

 changes in character of Jewish population
 (1904-1918), 16
 early Jewish residents, 3-4
 first organized Jewish activity, 13
 German Reform mercantile elite, 12
 growing up Jewish and female in, 154-158
 Hadassah, 39
 and Illinois Central Railroad, 3
 Jewish students in (1904-1918), 23-24
Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, 67
Chaney, James, 105
Choldin, Harvey, 107, 111
Choldin, Marianna, 111
Chonoles, Morton, 217
Chonoles, Rhoda (Mrs. Morton), 217
Clements, Charles, xviii, 52
Clements, Maie, 71
Cohen, Adelaide Bernstein (Mrs. Nathan), 8-10, 14,
 9, 13, 16, 19, 26, 30, 42, 144
Cohen, Ann M., 210
Cohen, Bertha Bing, 83
Cohen, Dov, 217
Cohen, Edna (Mrs. Henry), 75
Cohen, Isaac, 7
Cohen, Julius B., 9, 19, 20, 26, 30, 46, 52, 144, 156,
 161, 210
 biographical information, 144-147
 family background, 144-145
 musical career, 147
Cohen, Nathan, 83
Cohen, Nathan H., 7-10, 9, 13, 16, 19, 25, 26,
 144-145
 and Bernstein, Solomon, 7
 in Champaign, 8-10
 children of, 19, 145

 father, 7
 political involvement, 8, 9
 and Sinai Congregation, 9-10
 singing career, 8
 social role in community, 8-9
 tobacco business, 7-8
Cohen, Rabbi Henry, 48, 49, 74, 75, 75, 160, 161,
 175
 family of, 75
Cohen, Rabbi Henry (of Texas), 2, 47, 47
 wife of, 47
Cohen, Raymond R., 210
Cohen, Rolly S., 92
Cohen, Rose (Mrs. Ray), 87
Cohen, Sidney N., 210
Cohen, Simeon, 7
Cohen, Solomon, 83
Cohen, Solomon (Sol) B., 2, 3, 9, 26, 63, 144, 156,
 210
 award given in his honor, 147
 family background, 144-145
 and MacDowell Colony, 146
 memoir, *Years of Pilgrimage*, 146
 musical career, 146-147
 musical training, 145-146
Cohen, Susan, 215
Cohen, Sydney, 9
Cohn, Rubin [Lillian], 44, 90, 158
Cohn, Stuart, 45, 174
Collins, Chris, xv
Congregation B'nai Israel in Champaign-Urbana, 24
Cooperband, Leslie Rose, 217
Copland, Aaron, 146
Corman, Harvey, 153
Cossman, Leanna (Mrs. Ronald), 217

Cossman, Ronald, 217
 Costa, Gwendolyn, 217
 Couples' Club, 165-167
 Crames, Joel, 215
 Crames, Susan (Mrs. Joel), 215
 Cronin, Melissa (Mrs. Timothy), 217
 Cronin, Timothy, 217
 Cunningham, Judge J. O., 83

D

Danowitz, Gussie (Mrs. Hy), 217
 Danowitz, Hy, 217
 Davis, Al (John A.), ix, xv, xvii, 210, 216
 Davis, Ann, 46
 Davis, Edythe (Mrs. Cecil), xvi, **65**, **195**, 212
 Davis family, xiv
 Davis, Jeanette, 155
 Davis, Leonard Norman, 108, 155, 210
 Dean, Bernie, 195
 Deckard, Paula (Mrs. Wiley) viii, xvi, xvi, 126, 214
 Deckard, Stacy, 216
 Deckard, William Wiley, viii, **xvi**, 107, 181, 210, 214
 Deichman, Jean, 65, 97
 Depper, Ethel (Mrs. Stanley), 217
 Depper, Stanley, 217
 Derber, Charles, v, xiv
 Derber family, xiv
 Derber, Milton, v, **v**, xiv
 Derber, Zelda (Mrs. Milton), v, **v**, xiv
 Dessen, Edward, xvii, 111, 165, 166, **166**, 212
 Dessen family, xiv
 Dessen, Jonathan, viii, xvii, 215
 Dessen, Loretta (Mrs. Edward), xvii, 111, 165, 166, **166**, 212
 Dessen, Patricia (Mrs. Jonathan), viii, xvi, xvii, 215

Diaspora. *See also* Assimilation
 and Jews in Champaign-Urbana, 1
 Dietchweiler, Adrenne (Mrs. Michael), 216
 Dietchweiler, Michael, 216
 Dinitz, Richard, 89
 Dodds, Marci, 216
 d'Ollone, Max, 146
 Donahue, Paul, viii, 217
 Donahue, Susan (Mrs. Paul), viii, 217
 Donnini, David, 217
 Dooley, John D., 151, 210
 Doolin, David A., 210
 Downie, Stephen, 215
 Ducoff, Howard S., 210, 212
 Ducoff, Rose (Mrs. Howard), 212
 Dunitz, Mimi, 111, 206
 Durbin, Richard J., 205

E

East European Orthodox Jews
 in Champaign-Urbana, 12, 24
 Congregation B'nai Israel, 24
 earliest recorded Jewish service, 12
 and Sinai Temple, 23
 Egberman, Lee, viii, 215
 Egberman, Reva (Mrs. William), viii, ix, 86-87, 87, 213
 Egberman, William (Bill), viii, xvi, 210, 213
 Egri, Ted, 63
 Eichberg, Max, 81, 84
 Einhorn Garden, xix
 Einhorn, Judge Ann, xvi, 91, 197, 213
 Einstein, Albert, 44, 142
 Eisen, Judith, **150**
 Eisenberg, Harry, 210

Eisenstein, Bob, viii, 213
 Eisenstein, Laura (Mrs. Bob), 213
 Eisner, Albert, Sr., 10, 13
 Eisner, Charles, 10-11
 Eisner, Mrs. Albert, 14
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 196
 Entrekin, Allison Fromm, 113, 217
 Eppstein, Max M., 81
 Eppstein, Samuel, 81
 Epstein, Moses, 8
 Epstein, Sam, 8

F

Fabert, Beverly (Mrs. Owen), 166
 Fabert, Freddie, 63
 Fabert, Owen, 166
 Faier, Adam, 217
 Faier, Sharon (Mrs. Adam), 94, 217
 Falender, Susan (Mrs. Thomas), 216
 Falender, Thomas, 216
 Falick, Rabbi Jeffrey, 104
 Feinberg, Adam, 94
 Feinberg, Leonard, 210
 Feinberg, Samuel, 215
 Feist, Mrs. Morris, 87
 Felsenthal, Emma, 20
 Felsenthal, Rabbi Bernard, 13, 14, 20
 Ferber, Marianne, 214
 Ferratier, Warner Rubnitz, 217
 Ferrer, Robert, 215
 Fierstein, Harvey, 101, 105, **105**
 Fine, Stephanie, 94
 Fingold, Rona, 217
 Finkelstein, Rabbi Adolph, 68, **68**, 69
 Finkin, Eleanor (Mrs. Matthew), 215

Finkin, Matthew, 215
 Fire of 1971
 reaction to, 51
 reports of, 50
 response to, 59
 and writing Temple history, xiii
 Fish, Betty (Mrs. Raymond), 214
 Fish, Raymond, 214
 Fisher, Emmanuel, 2
 Fisher, Mrs. E., 14
 Fishman, Alishia, 102
 Fitzwilliams, Mrs. Alice, 26
 Flying Hebrew, The, 152-153
 Foss, Lucas, 146
 Fox, J. Logan, 46
 France, Virginia, 215
 Frank, Marvin M., 210
 Frank, Ray, 185
 Frankel, Rabbi Benjamin, 26, 26, 35, 39, 42, 68, 68,
 69, 74, 95, 136, 139, 140, 218
 and Hillel Foundation, 32-34
 on relevance of Judaism, 34
 Frankenberg, Julian, 213
 Frankenberg, Natalie (Mrs. Julian), ix, 86-87, 87,
 97, 111, 213
 Freedman, Jean (Mrs. Philip), 216
 Freedman, Philip, 216
 Friedberg, Barbara (Mrs. Maurice), 61, 89, 90, 214
 Friedberg, Maurice, 214
 Friedman, Joan M., 107, 215
 Friedman, Mary (Mrs. Paul), 215
 Friedman, Paul, 215
 Frooman, Hillary, viii, 215

G

Gablinger, Barak, 217
 Gablinger, Sharon (Mrs. Barak), 217
 Gahvari, Firouz, 215
 Gahvari, Nasrin, 215
 Gamson, Henry, 134
 Gap between Reform families and Conservative
 and Orthodox families, 60
 Garber, Lena (Mrs. Samuel), 160, 177, 177
 Garfinkel, Louis, 174, 174, 177, 196
 Garfinkel, Ruth, 177
 Garrick, Karen Lee (Mrs. Marshall), 216
 Garrick, Marshall, 216
 Gault, Joe, 151, 151
 Geffert, Alvin D., 210
 Germany
 and early Jewish settlers in Champaign-Urbana, 4
 influence of 1848 revolution, 6
 Gerstein, Marvin, 217
 Gewirth, Andrew, 217
 Giannetti, Gina, 94
 Gingold, Phyllis (Mrs. William), 216
 Gingold, Tamra, xv, 216
 Gingold, William, 216
 Ginsberg, Abraham, 210, 212
 Ginsberg, Donald, 111, 213
 Ginsberg, Jean (Mrs. Abraham), 195, 212
 Ginsberg, Joli (Mrs. Donald), 111, 213
 Gitler, Terri, viii, ix, xv, xvii, 216
 Glaser, Annette (Mrs. Milton), 87, 164, 166, 168,
 170, 180, 181, 185, 191, 191, 194, 196
 children of, 169-170
 Glaser, Dr. Milton R., 51, 166, 168, 210
 Glaser, Steve, ix, xv, xvii
 Glick, H. R., 13

Gluskoter, Alan, 116
 Gluskoter, Ann, 157
 Gluskoter, Harold [Leah], 51, 179
 Gluskoter, Steven, 116
 Goetel, Robin, 215
 Goldberg, Adele Eva, 216
 Goldberg, Andrea M. (Mrs. Joseph), 216
 Goldberg, David, 215
 Goldberg, Joseph P., 210, 216
 Goldberg, Mary Ann (Mrs. David), 215
 Goldberg, Samuel Isaac, 210
 Goldberg, Sheila, 197
 Goldenberg, Adelaide (Mrs. James), 166
 Goldenberg, James, 166
 Goldenfeld, Nigel, 215
 Goldin, Rabbi Judah, 41, 41, 72, 72, 155
 Goldman, Dara, 216
 Goldman, Emma, 101, 105, 105
 Goldstein, Benjamin, 69-70, 214
 Goldwasser, Laurie (Mrs. Michael), 214
 Goldwasser, Michael, 214
 Goodfriend, Marlene, viii, xv, 213
 Goodman, Andrew, 101, 105
 Goodman, Ann Davis, 134, 150
 Goodman, David, 214
 Goodman, Kazuko (Mrs. David), 214
 Gordon, Louis E., 210
 Gore, Leslie, 91
 Gore, Michael, 91
 Gorelik, Poly, 217
 Gorodinski, Iakov, 210, 216
 Gorodinski, Olga (Mrs. Iakov), 216
 Gottheil, Diane (Mrs. Fred), 214
 Gottheil, Fred, 52, 53, 92, 214
 Gottlieb, Florence, 216

Gottschalk, Carlyn (Mrs. Kurt), 87, 212
 Gottschalk family, xiv
 Gould, Joseph C., Jr., 210
 Green, Bette S. (Mrs. Robert), viii, xvi, 216
 Green, David, 216
 Green, Robert E., viii, xvi, 210, 216
 Greenberg, Eugene, 213
 Greenberg, Marshall (Mic), viii, 210, 215
 Greenberg, Rabbi Steven, 101, 105
 Greene, Laura H., 215
 Greenman, Leonard, 210
 Greenman, Myron, 210
 Greenman, Stanley, 155
 Greenstein, Betty, 63
 Greenstein, Bob, 160
 Greenstein, Dr. Carl, 49, 196
 Greenstein, Helen (Mrs. Carl), 212
 Grimley, David A., 217
 Gross, David, 216
 Gross, George, 215
 Gross, Ondine (Mrs. George), viii, 215
 Gross, Rosalie (Mrs. David), 216
 Grossman, Michael, 213
 Grossman, Morris, 210
 Gruber, Ruth Ellen, 71
 Grünstein, Eva, 61, 78
 Grusby, Alan, 215
 Grusby, Lynne (Mrs. Alan), 215
 Guibbory, Achsah, 215
 Gusfield, Dan, 150

H

Hadassah in Champaign-Urbana, 39
 Hahn, Harold, 151
 Hahn, Henry, 81

Hall, Chris, 217
 Hall, Tracy (Mrs. Chris), 217
 Halpern, Benjamin, xv, xvii, 20, 63, 109, 149, 197, 201, 215
 Halpern, Olga (Mrs. Ben), 215
 Hamburg, Alvin, 210, 212
 Hamburg, Anita (Mrs. Stephen), 197, 213
 Hamburg, David, 163
 Hamburg, David S., 210
 Hamburg family, xiv
 Hamburg, Joseph, ix, 151, 175-177, 175, 177, 196, 210, 212
 Hamburg, Linda, 163
 Hamburg, Merle (Mrs. Joseph), 63, 87, 160, 175, 177, 179, 212
 Hamburg, Mira (Mrs. Alvin), ix, xvii, 203, 212
 Hamburg, Reatha, 154, 155
 Hamburg, Stephen, 46, 160, 160, 213
 Hamburg, Susan, 150, 163
 Harkins, Ryan, 217
 Harkins, Sara T. (Mrs. Ryan), 217
 Harris, Frances J. (Mrs. Mitchell), 216
 Harris, Marjorie, 215
 Harris, Mitchell, 216
 Harris, Mrs. B. F., 15
 Harrison, Benjamin, 8
 Harrison, Rabbi Leon, 139
 Hart, L., 81
 Hart, S., 81
 Hatch, Mr. and Mrs. C. B., 11
 Havurah movement, 111
 Hays, Russell W., 210
 Haythornthwaite, Caroline, 216
 Hedges, Jane, 216
 Heiles, Anne M., 216

Helfer, Sherry, 214
 Helman, Abbie (Mrs. Sandy), 213
 Helman, Sandy, 213
 Hertzog, David, 215
 Hertzog, Nancy (Mrs. David), 215
 Herzl, Theodore, 99
 Heschel, Rabbi Abraham Joshua, 62
 Heumann, Leonard, viii, ix, 66, 106, 107, 186-189, 186, 196, 214
 Heumann, Roberta (Mrs. Leonard), 214
 Hillel Foundation
 building, 41
 founding, 31-33
 and Frankel, Rabbi Benjamin, 32-34, 74
 guests and speakers, 140-141
 and Kuhn, Isaac, 7
 and Menorah Society, 34
 naming, 33
 and Orthodox and Conservative Jews, 34
 precursors, 17-18
 preparation for founding, 16
 relations with Sinai Temple, 141
 and Rosenwald, Julius, 139
 and Sachar, Dr. Abram L., 35, 139-140
 and Sinai Temple, 1, 31-34, 141-142
 and townspeople, 41-42
 and Union of American Hebrew
 Congregations, 33
 work with B'nai B'rith, 142
 and young rabbis, 41
 and Zionists, 34
 Hillel, Rabbi, 1
 Hillman, Helee, 94
 History book for Sinai Temple
 committee, ix

and Hymowitz, Ann, 2
 origin and development, xiii
 and Sholem, Jerome J., 1-2
 writing, xvi-xvii
A History of the Jews (Sachar, 1930), 139
 Hoberman, Ruth Sarah, 216
 Holocaust
 assisting survivors, 31
 Yad Vashem triptych, xviii
 Hoover, Sara Lampert, viii, xv, 216
 Horwitz, Thelma. *See* Thelma Sachar
 Hubay, Jenö, 145-146
 Huelsing, Joe, 203
 Hutner, Gordon, 217
 Hyams, Harriet, 197
 Hymowitz, Ann, 2
 Hymowitz, Theodore (Ted), 210, 213

I

Illinois Central Railroad
 and early Jewish arrivals in Champaign County, 3
 Imlay, Karin (Mrs. James), viii, 215
 Imlay, James, 215
 Inbar, Hana, 217
 Intercollegiate Menorah Society, 17
 Intermarriage, 67, 200, 202-203
 Isolation from other Jews
 early Champaign-Urbana Jews, xi
 story of Ruth, xi
 Israel and Jewish life in America, 58
 Isserman, Andrew Mark, 216
 Itzkowitz, Bryan, 93
 Itzkowitz, Hagit, 216
 Ivrim and Menorah societies, 17-18

J

Jacob, Walter, 85
 Jacobs, Ed, 13
 Jacobsen-Isserman, Ellen, 216
 Jacobsohn, Daniel, 217
 Jaher, Frederic, ix, xvii, 216
 Jahiel, Abigail, 217
 Jakobsson, Naomi D., 208
 Jarrell, Wesley M., 217
 Jay, Leah (Mrs. Michael), 216
 Jay, Michael, 216
 Jericho, M., 81
 Jewish identity
 common themes, 132-133
 stories about, 118-131
 writing about, 115-117
 Jewish Ladies Social Circle, 2
 Burnham hospital and, 15
 cemetery support, 15
 charity, 20
 and congregational history, 18
 foreshadowing social functions of Hillel
 Foundation, 18
 founding and early history, 13-15
 and National Federation of Jewish Sisterhoods,
 21-22
 organ fund, 21
 organ purchase, 22
 raising money to build Temple, 22
 Jewish settlers in Champaign County
 earliest known Jewish resident, 4
 early, 3-4
 and other Jewish groups, 4
 Jews
 native midwestern, 6

political involvement, 8-9, 10-11

John Paul II, Pope, 76
 Johnson, Stanley, 214
 Judah, Leopold, 210
 Judaica Tapestry, 197
 Judaism, growing up in, 152-153, 154-158,
 158-160, 161-164
 Jung, Dr. Moses, 39, 68, 68, 70

K

Kahn, Brian, 215
 Kahn, Charles, 215
 Kahn, Hanna, 82
 Kahn, Hattie, 82
 Kahn, Nathan, 82
 Kamin, Samuel, 215
 Kanfer, Alaina (Mrs. Larry), 215
 Kanfer, Larry, iv, 215
 Kanis, Laura Steigmann, 217
 Kantor, Phyllis, 125
 Kaplan, Judith (Mrs. Richard), 214
 Kaplan, Marcia (Mrs. James Rudin), 176
 Kaplan, Rabbi, 156
 Kaplan, Richard, 89, 214
 Karam-Shilts, Helena, 217
 Kariher, Katherine, 10
 Karplus, Debra, 215
 Karsh, Annette, 213
 Karten, Steven, 217
 Katz, Aaron, 217
 Katz, Boris, 213
 Katz, Dwan (Mrs. Aaron), 217
 Katz, Lilian (Mrs. Boris), 213
 Katz-Downie, Deborah, 89, 97, 215
 Katzenellenbogen, Benita (Mrs. John), 214

Katzenellenbogen, John, 214
 Kaufman, Hattie (Mrs. Jacob M.), 10, 14, 15, 16, 20, 30, 31, 32, 33, 38, 43, 46, **53**, 94, 97, 156, 177
 and Mercy Hospital, 11
 parents of, 11
 Kaufman, Jacob M., 10, 13, 16, 20, 23, 26, 27, 30, **196**
 family, 11
 first president of Sinai Congregation, 11
 Kaufman, Jerome (Jerry), 89, 107, 210, 213
 Kaufman, Judith (Mrs. Jerome), 107, 108, 213
 Kaufman, Laura, 69
 Kaufman, Sharon, 97
 Kaufman, Stanley, 20, 46, 210
 Kaye, Danny, 195
 Kaye, Gerald, 206
 Kazansky, Lilia, 75
 Keaton, April, 216
 Keats, John ("Ode to a Nightingale"), x, xi
 Kertzner, Rabbi Morris, 39, 70-71, **70**
 Kessler, Frances (Mrs. Phillip), 166
 Kessler, Phillip, 166
 Kessler, Susan, **160**, 160
 Khamarmer, Sarra, **65**, **195**, 217
 Kiell, Norman T., 210
 King, Martin Luther, Jr., 56, 76
 Kinley, David, 139
 Klatsky, Jennifer, 215
 Klein, Andrea (Mrs. Norman), viii, xv, **66**, 79, **92**, **108**, **199**
 Klein, Barbara (Mrs. Miles), 213
 Klein, Elizabeth (*See also* Shapiro, Elizabeth Klein), xiv, **204**
 Klein, Florence E., 217
 Klein, Lawrence, 210

Klein, Miles, ix, **179**, *180-181*, **180**, **196**, 213
 Klein, Rabbi Norman Mark, ix, **xvi**, **xvii**, 65-66, **66**, 79, 79, 98, 100, 103, **106**, 110, 112, 187, 190, **193**, **199**, **202**, **203**, **205**, 216, **220**
 on centenary, *205*
 family of, 79
 reflections on tenure at Sinai Temple, *198-203*
 on trends and developments in American Judaism, *198-203*
 Kling, Blair B., viii, ix, xiii, xvi, xvii, 55-73, 115, 210, 213
 Kling, Joanna, 216
 Kling, Julia (Mrs. Blair), 213
 Klorfine, Ida, 160
 Koeningsberg, Viola, 211
 Kogut, John B., 215
 Kohen, Alfred, 211
 Kohen, Eileen (Mrs. William), 214
 Kohen, William, 214
 Kohn, Alfred, 211
 Kohn, Norman R., 211
 Kohn, Perry, 214
 Koller, Dr. Armin, 2, 24, **29**, 68, **68**, 156, **156**
 Koller girls, 155
 Koller, Katherine (Mrs. Armin), **29**, 156
 Konisky, Judy, 197
 Korr, Wynne Sandra, 217
 Korry, Dr. Myron, **122**, 166
 Korry, Michelle, **122**
 Korry, Richard, **122**
 Korry, Vera (Mrs. Myron), 87, **122**, 166
 Koslovsky, Craig, 216
 Kotok, Stephen, 51
 Kozoll, Charles, ix, 181, **181**, **196**, 214
 Kozoll, Joan (Mrs. Charles), viii, xv, 214

Kramer, Natalie W., 217
 Kramsky, Meyer, 211
 Krasavin, Nina (Mrs. Serge), 215
 Krasavin, Serge, 215
 Krasnow, Doris (Mrs. Marvin), 87
 Krutsinger, Scott, 216
 Kuhn, Isaac, 13, 16, 17, 20, **23**, **23**, **24**, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 38, 44, 46, **53**, **135**, 139, 141, 175, **196**
 on American politics, 137
 benevolence, 7
 biographical information, 135-137
 childhood and education, 6-7
 conception of American Jewish community, 6
 and Hillel Foundation, 7
 Kuhn, Joseph, 5-7, **5**, 12, 13, 14, 81, 135, 136, 211
 and Loeb, Abraham, 5-6
 military service, 6, 211
 store founding, 6
 Kuhn, Rose (Mrs. Isaac), 20, **53**, 87, 160
 Kuhn, Sarah, 14
 Kulwin, Bobbie (Mrs. Myron), 166
 Kulwin, Dr. Myron H., 51, 166
 Kuper, Katherine (Kate) Diane, viii, xv, 215
 Kurland, Aaron, ix, 125, 158, **158**, 166, **181**, *181-182*, **182**, **196**, 211, 212
 Kurland, Jewel (Mrs. Aaron), ix, 125, *154-158*, 154-158, **154**, **155**, **158**, 166, 169, 170, 212
 Kurland, Ted, **150**
 Kushner, Gertrude, **65**, 215
 Kuznetsov, Helen, 216
 Kuznetsov, Nathan Haim, 211

L

Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society, 2

Landa, Joyce, **160**
 Landsman, Mark, xv
 Landsman, Pam, xv
 Langendorf, Michael, 215
 Langendorf, Sheri (Mrs. Michael), 215
 Lantos, Tom, 142, **143**
 Lanznar, Martin, 166
 Lapid, Benjamin, 217
 Lasner, Mildred (Mrs.), 22, **26**
 Laufhutte, Judi (Mrs. Rudi), 216
 Laufhutte, Martin, xv
 Laufhutte, Rudi, **199**, 216
 Laufman, Laurien, 215
 Leavitt, Arna, **150**
 Leavitt, Arnold H., 211, 212
 Leavitt, Audrey (Mrs. Arnold), **42**, 63, 87, 212
 Leavitt family, xiv
 Lebeson, Cecile (Mrs. Ira), 92, 112, 149, 213
 Lebeson, Ira, 92, 213
 Lebeson, Anita Libman, 18
 Lee, John, viii, 215
 Lees, Laura, 157
 Leipziger, Emil, 25
 Lelyveld, Joseph, 69
 Lenik, Diana, xvi, 214
 Lerner, Arthur, 213
 Lerner, Max, 143, **143**
 Lerner, Scott, 216
 Lerner, Susan (Mrs. Scott), 216
 LeRoy, Janet (Mrs. Michael), 215
 LeRoy, Michael, 215
 Lesbian and gay Jews
 advocacy of rights by CCAR, 101
 attitudes of Jewish community toward,
 101-104

 role models, 103-104
 social activists and, 105
 support by UAHC, 103
 Lesht, Faye, 215
 Leskosky, Richard, 214
 Levant, Rita, 105
 Levin, Emily, viii, **148**
 Levin, Ezra, viii, ix, 43, 51, 61, *148-149*, **148**, 159,
 174, **196**
 Levin family, xiv
 Levin, Helen (Mrs. Ezra), 51, 61, 63, 87, 90, 107, 147,
 148, 149, 160, 178, 197, 212
 Levin, Judy, **148**
 Levin, Susan, 46, **148**
 Levinsohn, Belle, **26**
 Levinsohn, Carolyn, **26**
 Levinsohn, Harry, 5, 13, **26**, **173**, **196**
 Levinsohn, Mrs. Charles, 42
 LeVold, J. Barlow, 217
 Levy, Allan, 214
 Levy, Dr. (Rabbi) Charles, 26, 27
 Levy, Joan (Mrs. Stanley), 87, **179**, 197, 213
 Levy, Joyce (Mrs. Ronald), 87, 213
 Levy, Leslie, 215
 Levy, Merle (Mrs. Allan), 214
 Levy, Rabbi Gersom, 27
 Levy, Ronald, 211, 213
 Levy, Sherrie (Mrs. Leslie), 215
 Levy, Stanley R., ix, 62, 97, 111, **179**, *182-184*, **182**,
 196, 211, 213
 Lewin, Allen, 211
 Lewin, Harry, 214
 Lewin, Jeanette (Mrs. Harry), 214
 Lewis, Arthur, ix, xiii, **xvii**, 26, 94, 95, 96, 156,
 172-174, **172**, 174, 177, **196**, 204, 211, 212

Lewis, Bernice (Mrs. Leonard), 20, **26**, 38, 42, 43, **53**,
 94, 96, 97, 156, 157, 172, 173, 177
 Lewis, Bonnie, **160**, 160
 Lewis family, xiv
 Lewis, Herman, 49, 173, **174**, 174, 175, **196**
 Lewis, James Hamilton, 22
 Lewis, Leo, 211
 Lewis, Lenore, 160, 177
 Lewis, Leonard, 2, 11, 12, 26, 44, 46, **53**, 155, **172**,
 174, 175, **196**
 Lewis, Mickey, 160
 Lewis, Norma (Mrs. Arthur), **xvii**, 46, 160, 172, 177,
 212
 Lewis, Professor Oscar, 46, 48
 Lewis, Wolf, 10, 11-12, 13, **26**, 172, **172**, **196**
 Libman, Adele, 63, 97, 158, **160**, 177
 Libman, Andrew, 217
 Libman, Ben, 211
 Libman, Butch, 160
 Libman, Clarence (Cuppy), 63, 158, **160**, 177
 Libman, Elissa (Mrs. Andrew), 217
 Libman family, xiv
 Libman, Jean, 177
 Libman, Lisa Lane (Mrs. William), viii, ix, *xiii-xvii*,
 66, 68, 98, 108, 167-168, **169**, 170, *171*, *172-174*,
 175-177, *192-194*, **192**, **193**, **196**, *212-217*, 213
 Libman, Robert (Bob), **159**, **160**, 211, 213
 Libman, Samuel, 174, 177, **196**
 Libman, Sondra (Mrs. Robert), 213
 Libman, William (Bill), 160, **160**, 213
 Lichtblau, Daniel, viii, xv, 215
 Lichtblau, Eileen (Mrs. Daniel), 215
 Lieberman, Bernice, 12, **65**, **195**, 216
 Lieberman, Moses, 26
 Liebersohn, Harry, ix, *135-137*, 215

Liebovich, Albert A., 211
 Liebovitch, Louis, 214
 Liebovitch, Shirley (Mrs. Louis), 214
 Lincoln, Abraham, 6, 137
 Lipschutz, Anita, 197
 Lipschutz, Roy, 179
 Lipson, Elizabeth, ix, xv, xvii, 167-170, 217
 Litman, Professor Simon, 3, 17, 18, 24, 27, 28, 29, 38, 41, 46, 53, 141
 Litman, Rachel (Ray) Frank (Mrs. Simon), 17, 18, 18, 26, 87, 141, 141, 185
 Loeb, Abraham, 10, 13, 211
 and Kuhn, Joseph, 5-6
 Loeb, Charles E., 13, 26, 46, 53, 155, 173, 173, 175, 196
 Loeb, Helen, (Mrs. Charles), 3, 42, 42, 43, 43, 63, 87
 Loeb, Lena (Mrs. Joseph), 6, 135
 Loeb, Mrs. Abe, 26
 Logan, John A., 8
 Long, Breckinridge, 142
 Lowell, Helen (Mrs. Robert), 166, 197
 Lowell, Robert, 166
 Lowenstern, Belle, 5, 13, 14
 Lowenstern, Monroe, 4, 5, 13, 196
 children of, 5
 and founding of Sinai Congregation, 5
 wife of, 14
 Lowenstern, Morris, 4, 6, 12, 13, 19, 27, 30, 81, 196, 211
 children of, 5
 and founding of Sinai Congregation, 5
 in Urbana, 4-5
 wife of, 13, 14
 Lowenstern, Philip, 4, 4, 13, 81
 Lutze, Thomas, 217

M

Macaraeg, Matthew, 217
 MacDowell, Edward, 146, 146
 MacDowell, Marian, 146
 Madonick, Brigit (Mrs. Michael), 217
 Madonick, Michael, 217
 Maffit, Rocky David, 215
 Maher, Terry, 3
 Mall, Cindy, 97, 215
 Manaster, Joanne (Mrs. Robert), 195, 215
 Manaster, Robert, 191, 215
 Mandel, Bebbe (Rose; Mrs. Eli), 164, 213
 Mandel, Eli, 164, 213
 Mandel, Gayle, 164
 Mann, Louis D., 211
 Mann, Rabbi Louis, 33, 34
 Marco, Jack, 24, 154, 173, 181
 Marco, Sadye Zimmerman (Mrs. Jack), 154, 154, 157, 158, 160, 197
 Marco-Kurland family, xiv
 Marcuson, Rabbi Isaac, 26
 Marks, Barry, 97
 Marsh, Roger A., 214
 Marshak, Kathryn (Mrs. Stephen), 216
 Marshak, Stephen, 216
 Martel, Anne, 65, 111, 213
 Martin, Rabbi Bernard, 2, 41, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 68, 73, 74, 74, 118, 159, 160, 161, 175, 175, 176, 218
 family of, 74
 and growth of Sinai Temple, 47
 and needs of American servicemen, 45
 and Sinai's fiftieth anniversary, 45-47
 at Sinai Temple, 45-48
 Marx, Werner, 211

Mason, Gary, 214
 Mason, Leslie Marsh (Mrs. Gary), 111, 214
 McCullough, State Auditor James H., 8
 McGinty, Alice (Mrs. Brendan), viii, 215
 McGinty, Brendan, 215
 McKinley, Senator William B., 22
 McLaughlin, Megan, 216
 McQuaid, Brian, 215
 McQuaid, Susan (Mrs. Brian), viii, 215
 Meir, Golda, 101, 105, 105
 Meis, Herbert J., 211
 Meis, Hershel, 211
 Meis, L., 13
 Melhado, Evan, 214
 Melhado, Lee (Mrs. Evan), 67, 88, 89, 214
 Membership list for 2004, 212-217
 Menorah Society and Hillel Foundation, 34
 Mervis, Josh, 217
 Mervis, Lynn (Mrs. Josh), 217
 Messing, Dr. (Rabbi) Leon, 25, 27
 Meyer, David, 214
 Meyer, Esther, 81
 Meyer, Joyce D., ix, 98-100, 98, 101, 102, 103
 Meyer, Rabbi Julian, 25
 Miklovsky, Michael, 71
 Mikva, Laurie, 216
 Military veterans of Sinai Temple, 151, 210-211
 Milk, Harvey, 101, 105, 105
 Minyan
 experimental Reform, 110
 traditional, 88-91
 Mirensky, Boris, 211
 Mizrahi, Carol (Mrs. Yoram), 108, 213
 Mizrahi, Yoram, 213
 Molasky, Sandra, 216

Morhaim, Dr. Isaac, 166, **166**, 212
 Morhaim family, xiv
 Morhaim, Ruth (Mrs. Isaac), 166, **166**, 212
 Morris, Lynn Barnett (Mrs. Steven), 215
 Morris, Steven, 215
 Moscone, Mayor George, 105
 Muchnik, Greg, 216
 Murav, Harriet, 217
 Myer Rosenfield Volunteer Recognition Plaque, xvi

N

Nagel, Brenda, **116**
 Nagel, Joyce (Mrs. Stuart), viii, 213
 Nagel, Stuart, 213
Narrow Bridge, The, xviii, 78
 Natan, Rabbi Yochanan, **xii**, xiii, xv
 Nathan, Alan, 217
 Nathan, Jane (Mrs. Alan), 217
 National Federation of Jewish Sisterhoods, 21-22
 Nazi Europe
 helping refugees from, 43-44
 living in, 128-131
 Neuman, Rabbi Isaac and, 52
 Nelson, Adelaide, 8
 Nelson, Barbara (Mrs. Penn), 214
 Nelson, Penn, 214
 Neuman, David, 91
 Neuman, Eva Grünstein (Mrs. Isaac), **61**, 78, 214
 Neuman, Rabbi Isaac, *xviii*, **52**, 53, 58-61, **59**, **61**,
 74, 77-78, **77**, 89, 90, 91, 93, **96**, 103, 110, 179,
 180, 181, **205**, 214, **220**
 background, 52
 on centenary of Sinai Temple, 205
 family of, 77, 78
 at Sinai Temple, 52-53

Newman, Beverly (Mrs. Ralph), 216
 Newman family, xiv
 Newman, Marajen, **155**
 Newman, Noble, 217
 Newman, Ralph, 211, 216
 Newman, Rebecca (Mrs. Noble), 217
 Newman, Richard J., 165, **165**, 166, 211, 212
 Newman, Shirley (Mrs. Richard), 165, **165**, 166, 212
 Newmans, Slater, 166
 Novak, Alice, 214
 Novak, Tony, viii, 214

O

Ober, Kenneth M. (Ken), 211, 216
 Oglesby, Governor Richard, 8
 Okazaki, Sumie, 216
 Olefsky, Zoe, **58**
 Olsen, Gary, 66
 Olson, Kenneth R., 211
 Olson, Pam (Mrs. Kenneth R.), 214
 O'Neil, James, 8
 Orthodox and Conservative Jews and Hillel
 Foundation, 34
 Orthodox congregation, disbanding, 31

P

Paisley, Michelle, 217
 Palencia-Roth, Michael, *xviii*, 78
 Pall, Emily, 216
 Pastreich, Emanuel, 217
 Pastreich, Isabel (Mrs. Emanuel), 217
 Pearlstein, Arne Jacob, 216
 Peck, Todd, 216
 Perelmutter, Rabbi Bernard, 71
 Perelmutter, Rabbi Hayim Gorem, 71

Perley, Rabbi Martin M., 1, 2, 40, **40**, 71-72, **71**, 155
 Perlman, Adrienne, 215
 Perlstein, George, 213
 Perlstein, Mary (Mrs. George), 213
 Perry, Michelle, 216
 Pfander, James, 216
 Pikowsky, Richard, 215
 Platt, Nancy (Mrs. Bernard Martin), 175
 Pleck, Elizabeth (Mrs. Joseph), ix, *138-143*, 215
 Pleck, Joseph, 215
 Porton, Fraeda (Mrs. Gary), 214
 Porton, Gary, viii, 52, 60, **60**, 67, 89, **106**, 109, 169,
 190, **196**, 214
 Potesman, Allen, 216
 Press, Andrea, 216
 Priesand, Rabbi Sally, 58, **58**, 74, 171, **219**
 Proclamations and other letters for centenary,
 205-208

R

Rabbis serving Sinai Temple
 Bloom, Brad, 78-79, **78**
 Cohen, Henry, 2, 75, **75**
 first full-time, 2, 74
 Klein, Norman Mark, 79, **79**
 Martin, Bernard, 2, 74, **74**
 Neuman, Isaac, 77-78, **77**
 Rudin, A. James, 76-77, **76**
 Weingart, Samuel, 77, **77**
 Rabin, Dana, 216
 Rabishaw, Rabbi Daniel, 92
 Ramey, George E., 30, 98
 Ramey, H. E., 30
 Raphaelson, Samson, 38
 Rattner, Abraham, 184, 188

Ray, Geoffrey, 214
 Ray, Karen (Mrs. Geoffrey), 214
 Reed, M. J., 22
 Reed, Sheila, 216
 Reichman, Alfred H., 211
 Reichman, Phillip Edward, 211
 Reineberg, Amelia, (Mrs. Lee), 87
 Reineberg, Lee, 196, 211
 Reiner, Irma, 215
 Reitz, Alice, viii
 Renner, Enos, 84, 85
 Replinger, Dot, 63
 Reston, James, 140
 Reuler, Sam, 10, 11, 13, 25
 Reynolds, Bernard, 211
 Rezits, Albert D., 211
 Rezits, Joseph M., 211
 Ribstein, Ann (Mrs. Larry), 217
 Ribstein, Larry, 217
 Rich, Robert F., 215
 Rietz, Julia, 216
 Rigberg, Albert Edward, 211
 Robeson, Kyle, 183
 Robinson, Edward Arlington, 146
 Robinson, Arthur, ix, xi, xvii, 51, 89, 91, 144-147, 171, 171, 197, 213
 Robinson, Gene, 89, 215
 Robinson, Julia (Mrs. Gene), 215
 Rohr-Krutsinger, Rachel, 216
 Roland, Lee, 63, 87
 Romalis, Jenny, 97
 Romero, Lionel O. (Rick), 211
 Romero, Lisa Ann, 217
 Roosevelt, Eleanor, 39, 140, 140
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 137

Rose, Andy, 102
 Rosen, Dorothy (Mrs. Sidney), 212
 Rosen, Sidney, 211, 212
 Rosenbaum, Elyse, 216
 Rosenbaum, Jill (Mrs. Randall), 217
 Rosenbaum, Randall, 217
 Rosenberg, Aaron, 214
 Rosenberg, Colonel, 121
 Rosenberg, Mildred (Mrs. Aaron), 214
 Rosenfield, Eva (Mrs. Myer), viii, xvi, xvi, xvii, 64, 213
 Rosenfield, Myer Joseph, xvi, 211, 213
 Rosenshine, Barak, 211, 214
 Rosenstock, Bruce, 89, 217
 Rosenwald, Julius, 27, 27-29, 33, 139
 Ross, Brian, 215
 Ross, Jacqueline (Mrs. Richard), 217
 Ross, Richard, 217
 Roth, Dan, 216
 Roth, Michal (Mrs. Dan), 216
 Rotman, Joseph, 214
 Rotman, Marganit (Mrs. Joseph), 214
 Rubenstein, Asa, xiii, ix, xiv, xvii, 1-53, 94, 98
 treatise on Champaign-Urbana Jewish community, xi
 Rubenstein, Pamela Silver, 3
 Rudin, Nathan, 58
 Rudin, Rabbi A. James, 49, 49, 55-58, 74, 75, 76-77, 76, 160, 162-163, 164, 175, 176
 Rudnick, Charlotte, 197
 Rudolph, Karen D., 217
 Rudovsky, Rabbi Benjamin, 46
 Ruslander, Rabbi Selwyn David, 40-41, 40, 71
 Ruth, amid the alien corn, xi

S

Sachar, Dr. Abram Leon, 1, 2, 24, 34, 35, 36, 36, 39, 41, 41, 42, 44, 45, 68, 72, 74, 95, 138-143, 138, 140, 141, 155, 174, 218
 activism during World War II, 142
 on anti-Semitism and sectarian antagonisms, 38
 assistant rabbis, 39-40
 biographical information, 35-39, 138-140
 B'nai B'rith work, 142
 children of, 140
 concept of Judaism's role in American life, 36-37
 family, 140-143
 and Hillel Foundation, 139-140
 popularity of services, 141
 president of Brandeis University, 143
 Sachar family, 140-143
 Sachar, Thelma, (Mrs. Abram), 138, 140, 143, 157
 children of, 140
 mother of, 156, 157
 Saks, David, 216
 Saks, Janice (Mrs. David), 216
 Samisch, G. Myron, 211
 Saperstein, Rabbi Sanford E., 73, 73
 Sapoznik, Ann (Mrs. Markham), 213
 Sapoznik family, xiv
 Sapoznik, Markham (Mark), 160, 213
 Sarapin, Marvin, 203
 Sarapin, Susan Hamburg H., ix, xi, xvii, 67, 68-73, 74-79, 92, 94, 96, 97, 161-164, 161-164, 191, 203, 218-219
 Sarna, Jonathan, 200-203, 200
 Sauret, Émile, 8, 145
 Schaalman, Rabbi Herman E., 73, 73, 74, 160
 Schaeffer, Rabbi Steven, viii, xvi, 74

Schafer, Stephen, 45, 46
 Schappes, Morris U., 70
 Scharf, Harriet, 150
 Scharf, Jeff, 164
 Scharf, Mrs. Jerry, 164
 Scheeline, Alex, viii, xv, 214
 Scheeline, Dorothy, viii, xv
 Scher, Steven J., 216
 Schiff, Donna (Mrs. Ronald), 87
 Schiller, Rose, 14
 Schmidt, Corky, 150
 Schneiderman, Beatrice Holtzman, 69
 Schneiderman, Rose, 101, 105
 Schnitzer, Jack, 214
 Schnitzer, Laurel (Mrs. Jack), 214
 Schoenberg, Annette H., 214
 Schoenberger, John, 59, 63
 Schomer, Paul, 213
 Schomer, Susan (Mrs. Paul), viii, ix, xiii, xv, xv, xvii, 86-87, 87, 168, 170, 191, 191, 196, 197, 213
 Schulhafer, L., 26
 Schulhafer, Mrs., 22
 Schulman, Anne, 97
 Schurz, Carl, 6
 Schwartz, Chuckie, 150, 162
 Schwartz family, xiv
 Schwartz, Henrietta, 213
 Schwartz, Henry W., 211
 Schwartz, Irving, 60
 Schwarz, Daniel, 81
 Schwarz, Henry, 81
 Schwarz, Leopold, 81
 Schwerner, Michael, 101, 105
 Schwitzer, Beri (Mrs. Joel), viii, ix, xv, xv, xvii, 65, 66, 92-97, 92, 97, 98, 193, 217

Schwitzer, Joel, 92, 217
 Schwitzer, Mira, 92
 Schwitzer, Zoe, 92
 Sebag-Montefiore, Simcha, 7
 Seders, community, 19-20
 Selicovitz, Abe, 13
 Seligman, Carl A., 211
 Seligman, Judy (Mrs. Lester), 213
 Seligman, Lester G., 211, 213
 Senn, A. Ralph, viii, 215
 Senoff, Lauren, 217
 Sevcík, Ottokar, 145
 Shalev, Drora, 216
 Shalev, Matti, 216
 Shapiro, David, 216
 Shapiro, Elizabeth Klein (Mrs. Michael), viii, ix, 110, 111, 111, 112-113, 199, 204, 213
 Shapiro, Michael, viii, ix, xv, 66, 67, 106-109, 186, 190-191, 190, 193, 196, 199, 213
 Shavitt, Isaiah, 217
 Shavitt, Sharon, 216
 Shavitt, Veronica (Mrs. Isaiah), 217
 Shepard, Matthew, 103
 Sherman, Senator Lawrence Y., 22
 Shiller, Mrs. B., 14
 Shimkin, Demetri, 211, 213
 Shimkin, Tauby Heller (Mrs. Demetri), xv, 197, 213
 Shmikler, Alice, 160, 177
 Shmikler, Cheryl, 141, 150
 Shmikler, Gilbert, 211
 Shmikler, Glenda, 160
 Shmikler, Joe, 177
 Shmikler, Michael, 215
 Shmikler, Michelle (Mrs. Michael), 215

Shmikler, Raymond, 211
 Shmikler, Reva, 160
 Shmikler, Sam, 174
 Sholem, Dan, 58
 Sholem, David, 214
 Sholem family, xiv
 and temple history, xiii
 Sholem, Faye, 2, 3, 42, 63
 Sholem, Jan (Mrs. David), viii, xv, 214
 Sholem, Jerome J., xiv, 44, 51
 death, 2
 and history of Sinai Temple, 1-2
 Sholem, Myron J., 155, 211, 212
 Sholem, Sonya (Mrs. Myron), 63, 197, 212
 Shuck, Asbury, 84
 Shulman, Abe, 13
 Siegel, Arthur, 217
 Siegel, Ivens (Naomi), 214
 Siegel, Ivens A., 211, 217
 Siegel, Jean (Mrs. Ivens), 217
 Siegel, Linda (Mrs. Martin), 87
 Siegel, Marsha Monaco (Mrs. Arthur), 217
 Siegel, Peter, 216
 Siess, Chester, 196, 212
 Siess, Helen (Mrs. Chester), 179
 Sigel, Franz, 6
 Silver, Rabbi Abba Hillel, 140
 Silverman, Brian, 214
 Silverman, Charles O., 153, 196, 211
 Silverman, Dorothy Brown (Mrs. Charles), 153
 Silverman family, xiv
 Silverman, Helaine, 216
 Silverman, Ilene Corman (Mrs. Brian), viii, 214
 Silverman, Mrs. Albert, 72
 Silverman, Rabbi Albert G., 72, 72

Silverman, Robert, ix, **150**, 152-153, 152, **155**, 162, 215

Simon, Abraham, 36, **211**

Simon, Charles, 37

Simon, Dorothy, **155**

Simon, Elliot, **37**

Simon family, xiv, 36

Simon, Harold, 37, 211, **211**

Simon, Hyman, *see* Simonson, Hyman

Simon, Jack A., 36, **37**, **51**, 179, 211, **211**, 212

Simon, Lenore, **37**, **211**

Simon, Marie, *see* Simonson, Marie

Simon, Max, **155**, 211

Simon, Mrs. Abraham, 21

Simon, Robert, 37, **37**, 211, **211**

Simon, Thelma, 37

Simonson, Hyman, **36**, 36-37

Simonson, Marie, **36**

Sinai Temple

adoption of name, 26

before Temple construction (1904-1918), 16

benevolence, 7

Board of Trustees and centennial year, xvii

bringing back former members, 61

building expansion, 65-66, 106-109

challenges in Temple life, 65

and Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, 67

changes in early 1960s, 48

civil rights movement and, 56

Cohen, Julius, and, 147

community Seders, 19-20

concern about weakening spiritual life, 62

construction of first Temple building, 30

early challenges, 24-25

East European Jews and, 23

evaluation of membership, 62-64, 200-201

failure to merge with Congregation B'nai

Israel, 24

fiftieth anniversary celebration, 45-47

fire of 1971, xiii, 2, 47, 50-51

first building committee, 27

first land purchase, 27

first president, 11

fixtures for new building, 60

growth in the 1970s, 60-61

growth in 1987-1995 period, 62

growth under Rabbi Martin, 47

Havurah movement, 111

and Hillel Foundation, 1, 7, 31-34

hiring first rabbis, 25

history of, 1-3

history of, 1966-1974, 55-59

history of, mid-1970s to mid-1980s, 59-61

history of, mid-1980s to mid-1990s, 61-66

history of, 1995 to 2005, 66-67

housing project, 49

inaugural meeting, 25

and Kuhn, Isaac, 6, 135-137

lesbian and gay Jews at, 101-104

location controversy, 27-30

looking to the future, 66-67

member stories, 151-195

military veterans, 151, 210-211

minyan, traditional, 88-91

modern congregation, xi

new Temple construction, 51-52

new Temple dedication, 52

new Temple planning, 49-50

non-Jewish spouses, 62

organ purchase (1918), 22

Orthodox group and, 1

Presidents, gallery of, 196

Presidents, recollections, 172-195

problems finding rabbi, 25-26

Rabbis serving, 74-79

Reform and Orthodox Jews and, 23-24

Reform members, 1

Religious School, 92-97

services before building of Temple, 19

social action, 49

spiritual leaders before 1951, 68-73

spur to found, 12-13

Statement of Principles (June 1972), 148-149

Sunday school establishment, 19

Synagogue 2000, 112-113

timeline, 218-219

trends in contemporary American Judaism,
198-203

and university students, 41

windows, 98-100

women presidents, 167-170

and Zionism, 39

Sinai Temple's Sisterhood, 2

assisting Jews in Europe and Israel, 43-44

demise, 64

fund-raising, 42

history, 86-87

and Jewish community, 42

and Reform and Orthodox Conservative
enclaves, 43

and Sunday School, 42, 43

Singer, Jill, 97

Sinow, Carole (Mrs. David), 214

Sinow, David, 214

Sklare, Marshall, 75

Slotnick, Beth (Mrs. Gary), 217
 Slotnick, Gary, 217
 Slottow, Gene, 213
 Slottow, Irene (Mrs. Gene), 213
 Slover, Bertha Bing, 26
 Small, Erwin, 211, 214
 Smith, Dan L., **xvi**, 104, 211, 217
 Smith, Marion (Mrs. Robert), 215
 Smith, Robert, 215
 Smith, Robert, 216
 Smith, W. H., 8
 Snir, Avigail (Mrs. Marc), 217
 Snir, Marc, 217
 Sobel, Water, 59, 63
 Social activism, Jewish examples, 105
 Sokolski, Jon (Cody), 216
 Solomon, James, 217
 Solomon, Levi, 8
 Sonderskov, Bob, 98
 Sonin, Linda, 93
 Sorkin, Alex, 211
 Soskin, Anthony, 214
 Soskin, Penelope (Mrs. Anthony), 214
 Spelke, Kenneth A., 216
 Spiers, Naomi, x
 Spooner, Rae (Mrs. Ray), **viii**, **xvi**, 96, 215
 Spooner, Ray, **viii**, **xvii**, **xix**, 80, 88, 91, 215
 Sredl, Dianne, **58**
 St. Denis, Ruth, 146
 Steen, Lynda (Mrs. Ted), 217
 Steen, Ted, 217
 Steffens, Lincoln, 39
 Steigmann, Frederick, 211, 215
 Steigmann, Robert, 213
 Steigmann, Ruth (Mrs. Frederick), 215

Steigmann, Sherry (Mrs. Robert), **viii**, **xvi**, 213
 Steinberg, Esther (Mrs. Marvin), **ix**, **xvi**, 87, 89, 90, 159, 165-166, **165**, 166, 212
 Steinberg family, **xiv**
 Steinberg, Louie, **150**
 Steinberg, Mark, 216
 Steinberg, Marvin, 90, 123, 159, 165, 166, 181, **196**, 212
 Steinberg, Sasha, **viii**, **xv**
 Stern, Abraham (Abe), 4, 6, 81
 and B'nai B'rith Grand Prairie Lodge No. 281, 4
 and founding of Sinai Congregation, 4
 Stern, Albert Leland, 4, 11, 12, 13, 22, 23, **26**, 27, 30, 46, **53**, **196**
 Stern, Albert W., 211
 Stern, Amelia (Mrs. Albert L.), **xiv**, 21, 22, 30, 42, 46, **53**, **53**
 community involvement, 38-39
 poems by, 31, 53
 Stern, Babette, 14, 22
 Stern, Barbara, 13, **160**
 Stern, Delia, 4
 Stern, Elizabeth Jane, 216
 Stern, Eugene, **155**, 211
 Stern, Marjorie Gould, 211
 Stern, Mim, **42**
 Stern, Mrs. Abe, 14
 Stern, Mrs. Walter, **26**
 Stern, Nathan, 4, 81
 and Stern, Abe, 4
 Stern, Walter, 4, 13, 22, 23, 27
 Stern, Walter Wolf, Jr., 49, 211
 Stevens, Hope, 216
 Stevenson, Adlai, 41
 Stewart, Bob, 214

Stipes, Royal A., 4
 Stolarsky, Kenneth, 214
 Stolarsky, Shira, **viii**, **xv**
 Stolkin, Mark, 215
 Stoller, Jason Art, 217
 Stoller, Robin (Mrs. Scott), 216
 Stoller, Scott, 216
 Stolz, Rabbi, 27
 Storch, Nicole (Mrs. Stephen), **viii**, **xvi**, 213
 Storch, Stephen, 213
 Strauss, Cynthia (Mrs. Mark), 215
 Strauss, Fran (Mrs. William), 213
 Strauss, Mark, 215
 Strauss, William, 213
 Suchman, Faye (Mrs. Richard), 166
 Suchman, Richard, 166
 Sudman, Blanche (Mrs. Seymour), **ix**, **xvii**, **65**, 170, **170**, 194-195, **194**, **196**, **199**, 213
 Sudman, Seymour, 181, 182, 194, **196**, **199**, 211, 213
 Sullivan, Cheri, 215
 Sunday school
 college students and, 93
 commitment to education and Jewish identity, 97
 curriculum and goals, 42-43
 curriculum and structure shift, 95-96
 early progress, 20
 educators, 92-93, 97
 finding educators, 62
 founding, 19
 growth, 96
 memories of, 94-95
 renaming as Religious School, 56
 teachers, 43
 Sussman, David, 217

Swengel, Ellen, 214
Sylvia, Richard Anthony, 216
Synagogue 2000, 112-113
Syrkin, Marie, 142

T

Tager, Ruth (Mrs. Stephen), 51, 52, 60, 66, **179**
Talley, Andrea, H., 211
Talley, Edward S., 211
Talley, James A., 211
Talley, James A., III, 211
Talley, Jean, 213
Tanner, Bertha (Mrs. Lewis), 160, 177
Tanner, Governor John, 8
Tanner, Lewis (Louie), 174, 177, 211
Taub, Barbara (Mrs. Bart), 215
Taub, Bart, 215
Tavill, Joyce Libman, ix, *158-160*
Teicher, Susan, 215
Tepper, Bea (Mrs. Manie), **65**, 212
Tepper, Buddi (Mrs. Michael), 87, 213
Tepper, Edward, viii, ix, 51, 160, **177**, *178-179*, **179**,
196, 213
Tepper family, xiv
Tepper, Fay (Mrs. Max), 212
Tepper, Manie, 212
Tepper, Michael, ix, 46, 60, 168, **179**, *179-180*, 181,
196, 213
Tepper, Nancy (Mrs. Edward), viii, ix, 62, *74-79*, 97,
167, **167**, *169*, 170, *184-185*, **184**, 186, 191, 194,
196, 213
Tepper, Trudie, 160
This Century of Spirit (Klein, Elizabeth), *204*
Thomas, Norman, 39
Thompson, Dorothy, 39, 140

Thursh, Helen, 214
Timberlake, Sybelle, 213
Toby, Ron, 214
Topolosky, Janis (Mrs. Maury), 214
Topolosky, Maury K., 211, 214
Torah, writing new for Sinai Temple, xii, xiii
Truman, Harry S., **140**
Trupin, Jonathan, 215
Trupin, Marilyn E., 213
Trupin, Suzanne, 214
Turner, Fred, 38

U

Ullom, Judith, 213
Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 26
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
 first Jewish co-ed, 4
 Jewish students, 1904-1918, 16-17, 18, 28-29
 preparing way for Religious Studies depart-
 ment, 39
Urbana
 early Jewish settlers, 4
 Lowenstern, Morris, 4-5

V

Valentine, Jane, 217
van Es, Bette (Mrs. John), 214
van Es, John, 214
Veterans Honor Roll Plaque, xvi
Vlach, Yvona, xvii

W

Wachtel family, xiv
Wachtel, Ira, 85, 91, 214
Wachtel, Lynn Weisel (Mrs. Ira), viii, 61, 85, **88**, 89,

90, **90**, 91, 98, 133, 214
Wachtel, Shira, 96
Wade, Mara, 216
Wagman, Marian (Mrs. Morton), 213
Wagman, Morton, 213
Walker, Dori Gordan (Mrs. Douglas), viii, ix, xv, xvii,
80, 84, 217
Walker, Douglas, 217
Walter, Elizabeth, (Mrs. Hank), 215
Walter, Hank, 215
Walter, Jane (Mrs. John), 213
Walter, John, 213
Wannemuehler, Suzanne A., 211, 216
Warwick, Donna, 215
Wasserman, Rabbi Sue Ann, 112
Wasserman, Sarah (Mrs. Stanley), 214
Wasserman, Stanley, 214
Waters, Saul, 81
Wax, Bernice (Mrs. Nelson), 212
Wax family, xiv
Wax, Nelson, 212
Weber, Lorraine, 197
Weichsel, Linda (Mrs. Paul), 213
Weichsel, Paul M., viii, 89, 90, 91, 211, 213
Weil, Shraga, 188
Weinberg, Elliot, 89, 213
Weinberg, Rosalind Faiman (Mrs. Elliot), 63, 89, 149,
213
Weiner, Barry, 213
Weiner, Linda (Mrs. Barry), 112, 213
Weingart, Allison, **177**
Weingart family, 77
Weingart, Kate (Mrs. Samuel), 77
Weingart, Rabbi Samuel, 49, **49**, 52, 58-59, 74, 77,
77, 171, **177**

Weingarten, Florence, 14, 15, 20, 87
 Weingarten, Lawrence, 20
 Weingarten, Mrs. Sam, 21, 42, **53**
 Weingarten, Sam, **12**, 13, 20, 27, 30, **196**
 Weisbach, Amy (Mrs. Michael), viii, xv, xvi, 94, 216
 Weisbach, Michael, 216
 Weisbaum, Jon, 211, 216
 Weisbaum, Katherine (Mrs. Jon), 216
 Weisel, Anne (Mrs. Leo), **65**, 212
 Weisel, Edward Berry, 133
 Weisel family, xiv
 Weisel, Leo, 211, 212
 Weiss, Elizabeth, 216
 Weissman, Diane, **150**
 Weissman family, xiv
 Weissman, Irving, 67, 211, 212
 Weissman, Sonia (Mrs. Irving), 67, 212
 Weissman, Tom, **150**
 West, Mrs. Guy, 19
 West Urbana, 2. *See also* Champaign-Urbana
 Westle, Arthur, viii, xvi, 211, 215
 Westle, Charlotte (Mrs. Arthur), viii, xvi, 215
 White, Daniel, 105
 Wiener, Marcie (Mrs. Mark), viii, xvi, 217
 Wiener, Mark, 217
 Wiese, Helen (Mrs. B. B.), 87
 Wiesel, Elie, 205
 Wilcox, Kirsten, 217
 Willette, Sharon (Mrs. Steven), 214
 Willette, Steven, 214
 Williams, Bruce, 216
 Winakor, Annette (Mrs. Arthur), 87
 Winakor, Arthur, 56, 177, **196**
 Windmuller, John, 211
 Windmuller, Rudi, 211

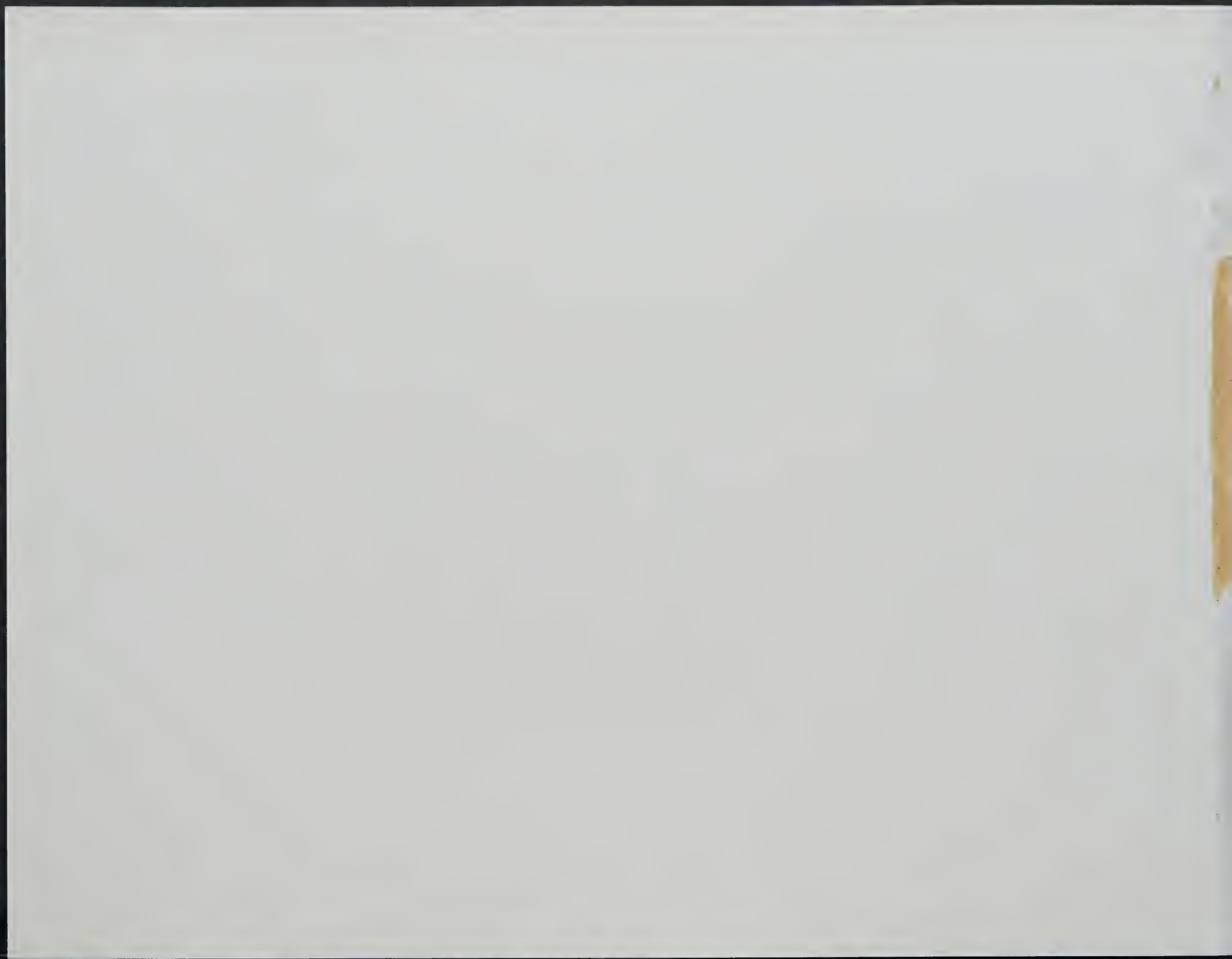
Windows of Sinai Temple, 98-100
 Winkel, Richard J., Jr., 206
 Winkler, Edward, 211
 Wise, Isaac Mayer, 7, 198
 Wise, Rabbi Stephen, 33, **141**
 Wolf, Charles A., **196**
 Wolf, Lida (Mrs. Charles), 87
 Wolf, Mrs. Arlene Bing, **26**
 Wolf, Mrs. Charles, 12, 42
 Wollstein, Helen, 11
 Wolpert, Ludwig, 52, 67
 Wood, Eileen, 62, 97
 Woolf, Michael, 217
 Woolfson, Jacob, 216
 World War I, work for servicemen, 22
 World War II
 activism of Abram Leon Sachar, 142
 Bloom, Captain Irvin, 151, **151**
 living under Nazi occupation, 128-131
 Wright, Abra, **113**
 Wright, Judge Francis M., 8
 Wuesteman, A. J., 22, 30

Y

Yad Vashem triptych, xviii
 Yairi, Ehud, 91, 111, 214
 Yairi, Janie (Mrs. Ehud), viii, xv, 91, 108, 111, 185, 214
 Yazdani, Ali, 216
 Youngerman family, xiv
 Youngerman, Ruth Kuhn (Mrs. William M.), xiii, xvi, 3, 7, 87, **204**, 212
 Youngerman, William D., 214
 Youngerman, William M., **196**, 211, 212

Z

Zangvil, Mazaal, 97
 Zeitlin, Professor Jacob, 17, 26
 Zeppin, Rabbi George, 12, 13, 26
 Zharnitsky, Inna (Mrs. Vadim), 217
 Zharnitsky, Vadim, 217
 Zibel, Milton, 211
 Zimmerman, Mathlia, 154, **154**, **155**, 157
 Zimmerman, Morris, 154, **154**, 156
 Zimmerman, Steven, 216
 Zionists and Hillel Foundation, 34





Amid the Alton Corn: 100 Years of Sindhi People in Champaign, Illinois • 1904-2004



Continued from front flap

military veterans and membership, and a timeline of events.

Intended for a varied audience, the book offers the pleasure of recalling the past for longtime members. Newer congregants are provided access to our common history and encouragement to embrace their own role in nourishing and preserving our heritage. Academics, scholars, and historians able to discern the forces threaded through the details will reach a deeper understanding of that period. Those with special interest in the Jewish experience in small-town America will find our narrative a valuable resource. The detailed index will benefit both serious students and genealogists. Those from other religions may gain a greater appreciation of their neighbors, and perhaps find many similarities to their own experience in forming a community of faith in a new environment.

We hope that members will take pride in following this remarkable journey and that this volume will become a treasured keepsake. As Sinai Temple begins its second century, we no longer stand amid the alien corn, but are at home, free to practice our faith in God and Judaism on a beautiful prairie in a blessed land.

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"*Amid the Alien Corn* is a lively portrayal of Sinai Temple's long, rich history and its promising future. A colorful patchwork of facts and figures, personal reminiscences and stories by and about leaders and members of the Sinai Temple family—past and present—its pages lovingly depict the congregation's struggles and successes, as well as trends in the evolution of Reform Judaism throughout the last century. Indeed, it is a most fitting tribute to all whose devotion has made Sinai Temple a vibrant *kehillah kedosha* within the Champaign community and a beacon of Jewish life in America's heartland."

Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie
President, Union for Reform Judaism

"In part a detailed local history, in part a commentary on recent developments, in part a collection of biographical sketches and in part a celebratory centennial album, *Amid the Alien Corn* is rich in information about the Jewish community of Champaign-Urbana and will certainly be welcomed and appreciated by all those with an interest in that community, both now and in the future."

Lee Shai Weissbach
Professor of History, University of Louisville
Author of *Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History* (Yale, 2005)

"Sinai Temple of Champaign, Illinois lays claim to a remarkable history that, in some respects, has influenced the broad course of Jewish life in America. How so? In order to understand the beginnings of the Hillel Jewish student movement or the International Menorah Society, it will be necessary to examine the history of this Midwestern synagogue. If one seeks to understand the influences that shaped the likes of Abram Sachar, founding president of Brandeis University, one must become familiar with this man's stint of service in Champaign, Illinois. And those interested in the biography of Ray Frank—probably the first American woman to assume a rabbinical role in America—will discover that this extraordinary woman was also one of the founding members of Sinai Temple's Sisterhood. *Amid the Alien Corn* is an interesting and well-written collection of essays, and only the most hardhearted reader will fail to be moved by the loving spirit of gratitude, tribute, and pride that radiates powerfully from this book's pages."

Dr. Gary P. Zola, Executive Director
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Associate Professor of the American Jewish Experience
Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion

